

POEMS OF THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

EDITED BY
J. W. CUNLIFFE
AND
S. E. CAMERON



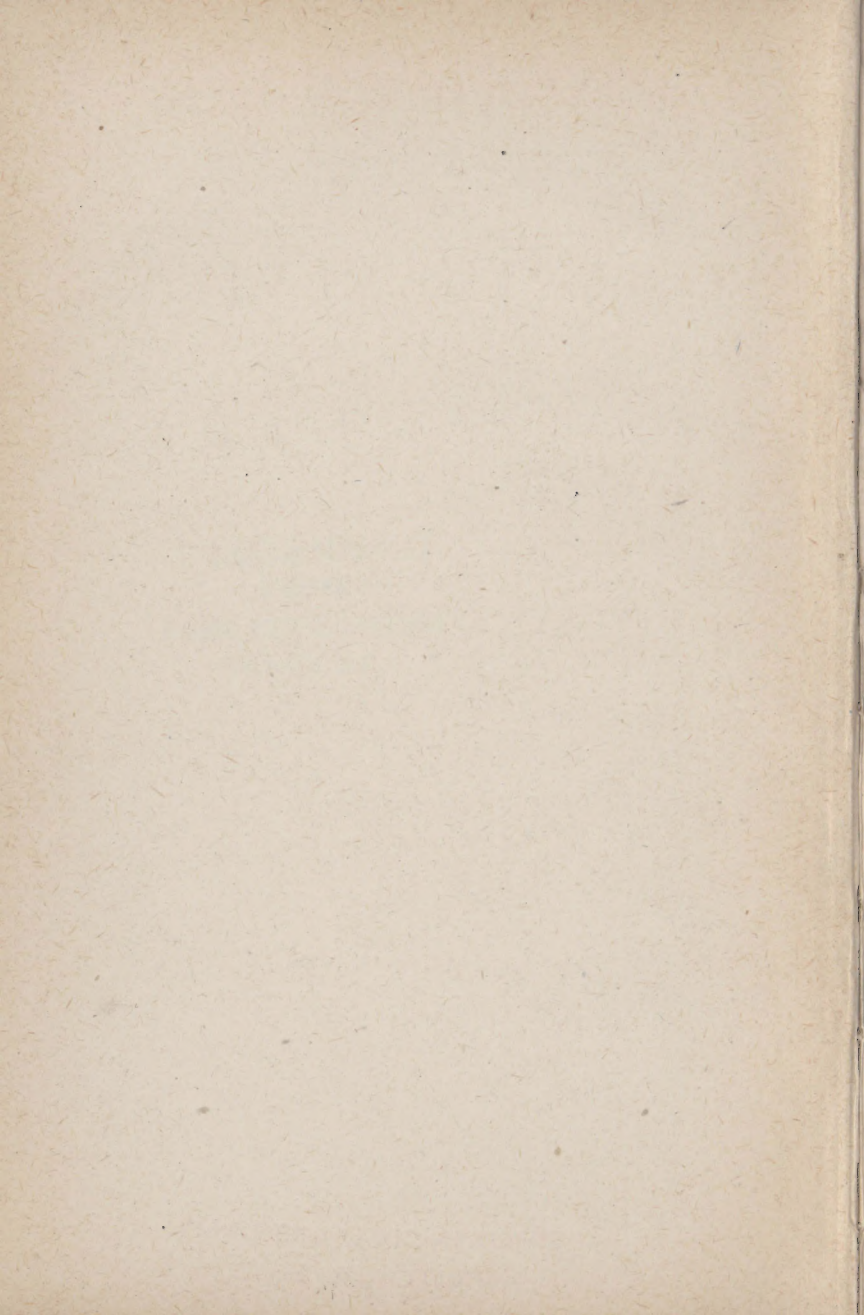
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POEMS
OF THE
ROMANTIC REVIVAL

EDITED BY
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AND
SUSAN E. CAMERON, M.A.
OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE

— BY —

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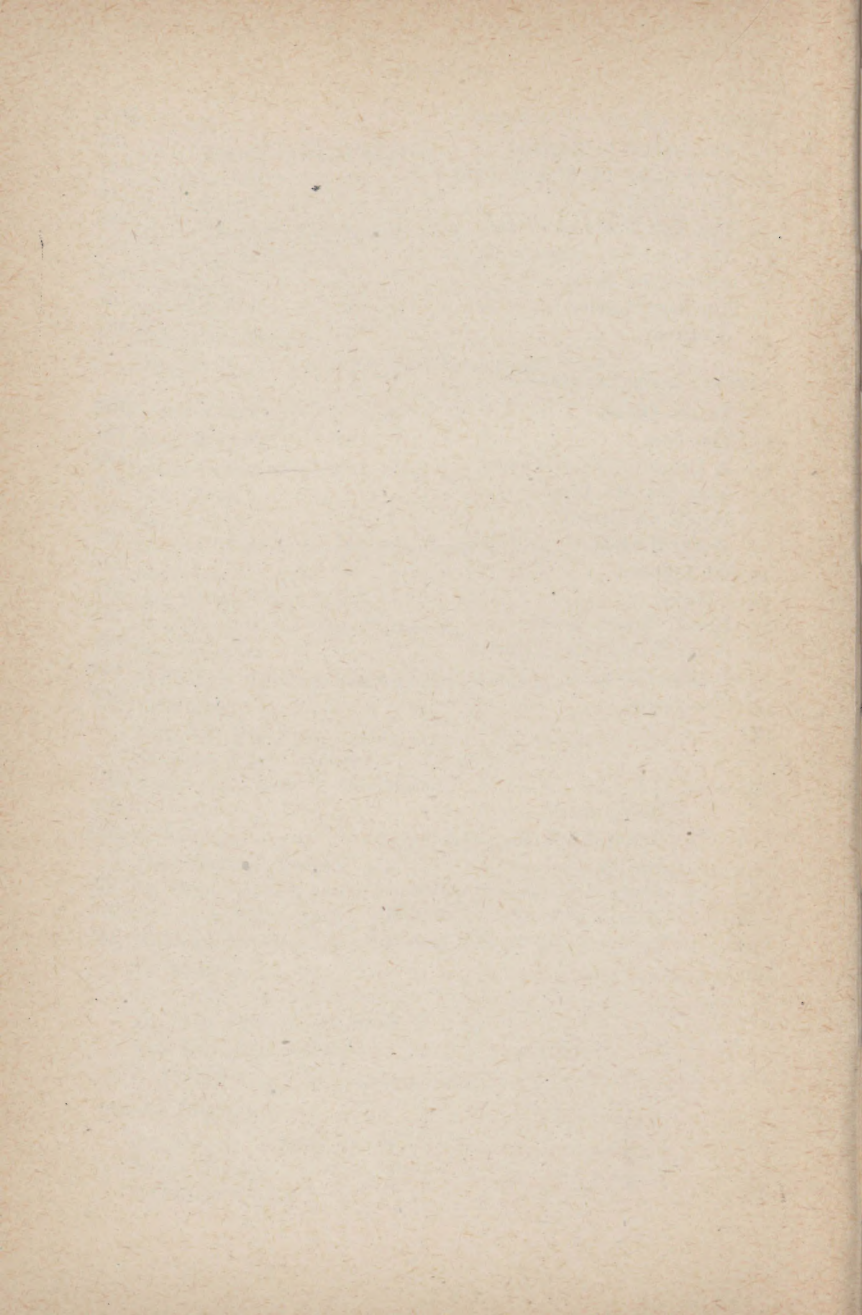
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PREFATORY NOTE.

The poetry in this volume consists of selections taken from a few of the leading poets of the nineteenth century. It is prefaced by an introduction, in which, and wisely, no attempt is made to expound the finer subtleties of poetry. Such lofty matters, even if they were not obscure in more regards than one, are vainly set before the young, whose relish for poetry is due to feeling—which, it is hoped, will refine itself into taste—and not to intellectual criticism. At the same time, the Introduction points out the characteristics of the poets of whose work the Editors have given specimens, and they are set forth in such a manner as to be appreciated without difficulty by a Senior Class. The notes are intended to explain words, phrases and allusions which would, without comment, fail to be understood by some of the learners for whom the book has been compiled. It is not easy to discern the line which separates what is obvious from what is not, and if the notes appear unnecessary here and there it should be remembered that they are written for young persons, and that the most poorly informed youth has to be taken into account.

A few words to the teacher who uses this book may seem not out of place. And, first of all, the bearing of many of the extracts will be the more clearly seen by making supplementary reference to political history and biography. The question whether a poet is the outcome

of his age or not is both debatable and perennial; yet on turning to fact the discovery is soon made that the great majority of writers are moulded by their environment, and reflect it in varying intensity according to circumstances. The age and the poet generally display action and reaction. To understand the English Republican poetry of the end of the eighteenth century some knowledge of the French Revolution is necessary, and that is precisely what a teacher should supply with the poems that celebrate republicanism. Again, various sets of excellent little biographies of our leading poets have been published; among them may be mentioned the "English Men of Letters" series. The volumes of that issue, and of similar issues, which treat of the poets included in *Poems of the Romantic Revival* ought to be accessible to every teacher.

While the Editor is to be commended for not bewildering those for whom this book is intended by plunging into theories concerning the nature of poetry, there are certain things on a higher plane than the mere facts of history and biography that the teacher who reads thoughtfully can discern. If, for instance, a short piece of reflective poetry is taken, the leading idea, the idea perhaps that caused its creation, will generally be found expressed more or less pointedly in it. Thorough familiarity with the poem is, of course, necessary before the keystone of the poetic arch can be pointed out. If Tennyson's poem, entitled *Break, Break, Break* (p. 195), is chosen, the keystone is found in the words of grief:

But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still,

from which the piece is evolved through contrasts in

which we hear the unceasing voice of the sea (break, break, break) and the joyous voices of those whose lives are so much bound up with it. Three verses of contrast, one of them expanded, and the whole effort lies before us. Or again, to take the song in *The Princess* (p. 196):

The splendour falls on castle walls,

the dominant thought is brought out in the lines:

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever,

to which the previous portion of the poem again stands in contrast. Or once more, in *Sir Galahad* (p. 191), the line:

A virgin heart in work and will,

mirrors the essence of the piece.

It may be said that the treatment just indicated is impossible in narrative poems, and the criticism is just; but here also the teacher can point out certain features which, generally speaking, show that what is being dealt with is poetry and not prose. To imagine that poetry differs from prose, because the one possesses rhythm and the other does not, is a fallacy too often entertained. Prose sentences broken off anywhere become verse if they are *regularly* accented. A teacher can, however, tell his pupils without fear of going astray that poets are fond of thinking in images (simile, metaphor). A narrative or reflective poem may be examined on that head alone. Shelley is particularly rich in imagery: his *Ode to the West Wind* exhibits a series of images, and from their impressiveness much of its force is derived. The same quality resides in his *Cloud* and *Skylark*. In connection with poetic imagery, as seen in Shelley, I may quote

what I have written elsewhere about the poem last mentioned. "Let me endeavour to find the main ideapath through Shelley's *Skylark*. At eventide the bird begins to ascend; it is like a cloud of fire in the *blue* deep; then it flies westward to the *golden* lightning of the sunken sun; then on through the pale *purple* even until it is as a star in the daylight—invisible: three stanzas with motion predominant. Since motion can no longer be dwelt on, its consequence, invisibility, forms the main theme. The star invisible suggests the moon, invisible; the invisible moon, a striking effect of cloudy moonlight; cloudy moonlight, the gorgeous colour-effect of rainbow-clouds—these effects being set to the keynote of the poem, the bird's song. Then succeed four conspicuous images, the remains of perhaps a score, with invisibility or deep seclusion running through all:

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought.

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower.

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew.

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves.

In the complete stanzas it will be found that these images of seclusion are blended with sound, colour, odour; sound, the keynote, again becomes predominant; the nature of the bird's song is considered, its object, its influence. This element gets more pronounced towards the close, until the poem ends with the note of its commencement:

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

* * * * *

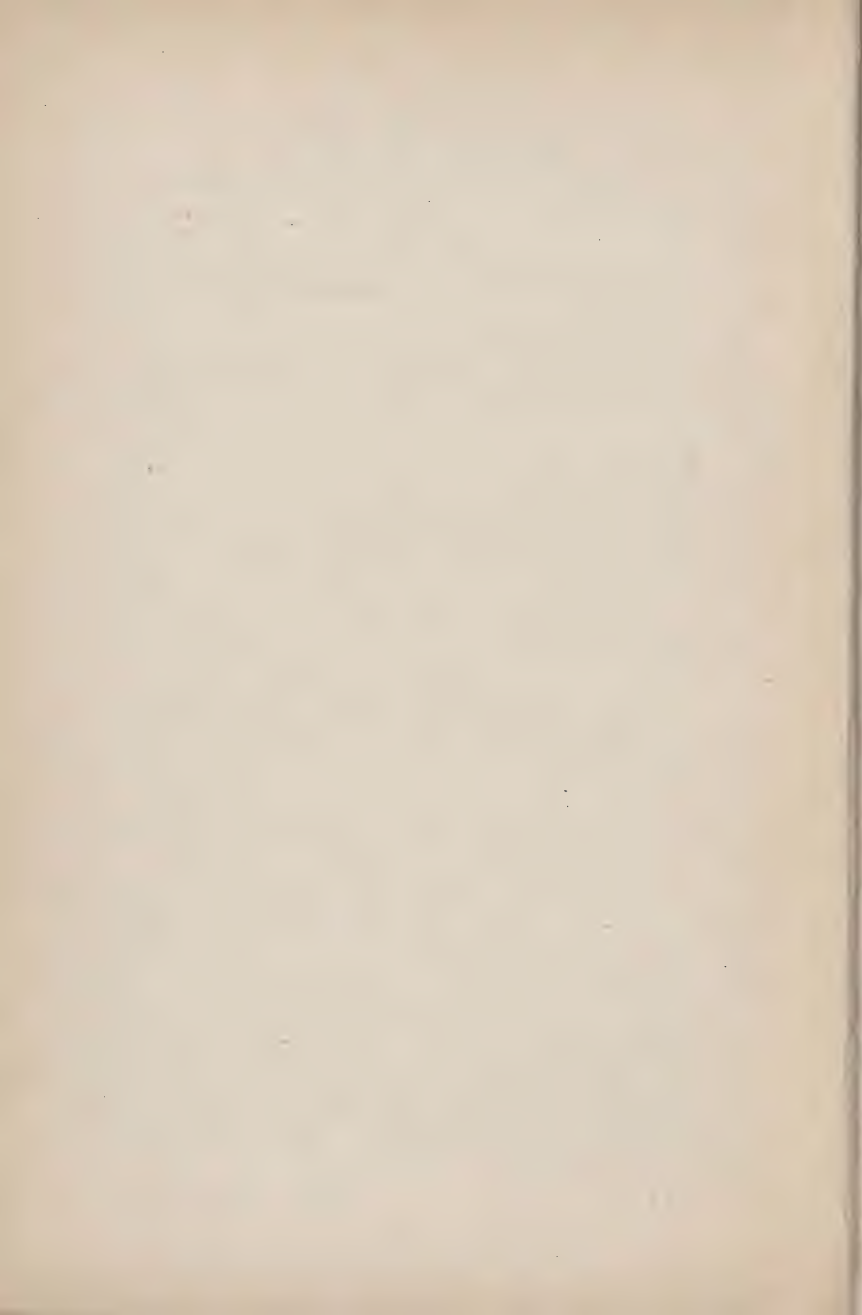
Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now."

Poetry makes liberal use of devices which are found in prose also, such as repetition for emphasis, inversion for emphasis, and others of which an account is generally given in handbooks of rhetoric. The teacher will find them amply exemplified in this book, and by discussing them, interest and educate his class.

The teacher who wishes to possess an extensive bibliography of works that discuss literary criticism should obtain *Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism*, by Gayley and Scott (Ginn & Co.). If a small selection of books treating of poetry and literary criticism has to be made, it might well include Stedman's *Nature of Poetry*; Sherman's *Analytics of Literature* (Ginn & Co.), and Gummere's *Handbook of Poetics* (Ginn & Co.).

CHAS. E. MOYSE.



INTRODUCTION.

I.—COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH.

The Romantic Revival is one of those great literary movements which are as hard to explain fully as the crises in the spiritual life of an individual; but it is at least possible to outline its chief characteristics and the successive steps of its development. In Germany and France, even before the Revolution had stirred the minds and passions of Europe, we may see indications that old things were passing away and a new age was at hand. In English poetry we discern signs of change in Cowper's love of nature, in Crabbe's realism, in Blake's mysticism,—above all in Burns's "heartfelt songs," with their new-found notes of true passion and sympathy with the lowly life of field and cottage. But they are "the forerunners of the revolt not the conscious leaders of it." The real beginning of the new era in English poetry may be dated from the time when Coleridge and Wordsworth met in the Somersetshire hills in 1797. Both were young, both had regarded with enthusiastic admiration the earlier triumphs of the French Revolution, and had been distressed and alienated by its later excesses; both were supremely interested in philosophy and poetry. Coleridge was in full tide of that flow of conversation which he had begun as a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital, and which he maintained till his death. Dorothy Wordsworth says of him at this time:—

"He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is, for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough, black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression: but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind: it has more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead."

Of Wordsworth, Hazlitt, who was for a time one of the party, wrote at a later date:—

"There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face."

Each of the two young poets had the greatest reverence and admiration for the other. Wordsworth thought Coleridge "the only wonderful man he had ever met;" Coleridge said of Wordsworth: "I feel myself a little man by his side." Each judgment was, in a certain sense, right; and it is no wonder that their meeting enriched and quickened both minds and changed the current of English poetry. Coleridge spoke to Hazlitt of "an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth to see how far the public taste would endure

poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II." But we are fortunate in having accounts of this modest undertaking, fraught with such momentous results, from the authors' own hands. Coleridge writes in the *Biographia Literaria*:—

"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in *this* sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand."

Wordsworth's account is substantially the same, though he gives fuller details of how the undertaking originated:—

"In the autumn of 1797 Mr. Coleridge, my sister and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the 'Ancient Mariner,' founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested. These trifling contributions, all but one (which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded), slipped out of his mind, as they well might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective

manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. . . . We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. *The Ancient Mariner* grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to talk of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on natural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium."

The little volume was published anonymously, under the title of *Lyrical Ballads*, by an obscure Bristol printer, in 1798, and attracted little attention. Mrs. Coleridge writes: "the Lyrical Ballads are not liked at all by any." Yet Wordsworth's contributions included the *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey* (pp. 34-38 of this issue), in which are to be noted not only the simpler diction and the subjects taken from common life the authors promised, but a way of regarding nature characteristic of Wordsworth's genius. It was something new and strange in English poetry, and profoundly affected its subsequent development. The poem is worthy of the most careful study, along with the lines from *The Prelude* preceding it in this edition. The same spirit is to be marked in Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight* (pp. 25-27), written when he was keenly affected by Wordsworth's influence. German philosophy and the opium habit withdrew Coleridge from poetry in his later years; but Wordsworth devoted a long life, in the seclusion of the Lake District, to his high mission of "expounding the Bible of Nature."

The Ancient Mariner was also too remarkable a phenomenon for the public to have any inkling of its

significance at the time. They had to be familiarized with a long series of Scott's Highland chieftains, Byron's corsairs, and Southey's warriors of all climes and ages, before they were able to recognize in the *Ancient Mariner* the first and greatest hero of them all. But the public can hardly be blamed for its tardiness in view of the blindness of the critics of the time to the fact, now universally acknowledged, that Coleridge's ballad marked an epoch in English poetry. Charles Lamb stood almost alone in his appreciation; Wordsworth thought that this poem, which was given the first place in *Lyrical Ballads* had "upon the whole been an injury to the volume," and he suggested that in the second edition something more likely to suit the common taste should be substituted for it.

II.—BYRON AND SHELLEY.

The long struggle against Napoleon drove Wordsworth and Coleridge from sympathy with French republicanism into reactionary conservatism. The revolutionary movement, stained with violence and issuing in military despotism, frightened the English Government into a policy of repression. In the early years of the nineteenth century, British freedom, instead of advancing, seemed to be moving backwards. The repressive measures were so severe and tyrannical, and the outlook for the future so dark, that some young and ardent minds were impelled to extreme views in the opposite direction. This spirit of revolt is most powerfully expressed in the

writings of Byron and Shelley. Though they were friends in exile, and at one in their resentment at the turn taken by public opinion in England, their views and natures were radically different. About Byron's character and genius very different opinions have been held in different times and places, and English critics are still far from agreement. A just view seems to be expressed by Professor Dowden: "His poetry is an assertion of the supremacy of the individual will; it is the poetry of revolt; it expresses at least the negative side of the Revolution with unequalled force. It is a cry for freedom,—freedom from the tottering tyrannies of the time, from the tottering creeds, from discredited traditions, from the hypocrisies of vulgar respectability, from cant and sham. . . . He had a strong feeling for the Revolutionary movement as a destructive force; he sympathized with its negative tendencies; he enjoyed the sense of emancipation from the old restraints; he loved to demonstrate the boundless freedom of the individual, in his passions, his self-will, his audacities of belief or unbelief, his scorn for things commonly regarded with veneration or esteem. But he cared little for the principles or tendencies of the Revolution which are positive, constructive, social; he had neither the power of thought nor the patience which are needed by one who would build up; it was enough for him if he could deliver a reeling blow at despotisms, half-realized creeds, lifeless conventions, and dull respectabilities, or could mock at them in their state of infirmity."

To this task of destruction Byron brought a strong, passionate nature and a brilliant intellect; and on the positive side his sympathy with downtrodden national-

ities and his efforts to free Greece from the oppression of the Turk must not be forgotten.

The feelings of disgust and resentment at British conventionality and hypocrisy which drove Byron into cynical scoffing had a very different outcome in the poetry of Shelley. Shelley attempted to reconstruct human society on the theoretical basis of his teacher and father-in-law, the philosopher Godwin; and when the enterprise came to grief, both in the political arena and in his own private life, he sought consolation in an ideal world of his own imagining. Nothing could be further from Byron's cynicism than Shelley's visionary enthusiasm and vague aspirations towards a democratic millenium. Byron is of the world, worldly; and a full appreciation of his very varied qualities and defects comes only after some experience of life and study of literature. Shelley soars into the empyrean, and carries with him to those heights the young souls who are blessed with any touch of spiritual kinship. Such readers need not fear any evil influence from Shelley's views of institutions and creeds they possibly hold sacred. Browning has well said: "Whatever Shelley was, he was with an admirable sincerity. It was not always truth that he thought and spoke; but in the purity of truth he spoke and thought always." Much of his best poetry is absolutely independent of his religious and philosophical opinions. To quote the words of a recent critic (Mr. Gosse): "There are elements even in Shelley which have to be pared away; but, when these are removed, the remainder is beautiful beyond the range of praise—perfect in aerial, choral melody, perfect in the splendour and purity of its

imagery, perfect in the divine sweetness and magnetic tenderness of its sentiment. He is probably the English writer who has achieved the highest successes in pure lyric, whether of an elaborate and antiphonal order, or of that which springs in a stream of soaring music straight from the heart."

III.—KEATS.

Shelley has for ever associated the name of Keats with his own by *Adonais*, the sublimest elegy in the English language; but the younger poet had little in common with the Prophet of Revolt. It is true that Keats shared the liberal opinions of the so-called "cockney" school of poets, of which his friend, Leigh Hunt, was the leader; and this was enough to bring down upon him the lash of the Tory *Quarterly Review*. But Keats gave no expression to his political views in his verse; his love of beauty is sufficient in and to itself; it is not, like Shelley's, a refuge from the sense of resentment at human wrongs and misfortunes. The prevailing influences under which his genius developed were Spenser and the Italian romantic poets, especially Ariosto; but he soon made the realm of romance his own. No one struck with a surer hand the note which

Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Principal Shairp, in his study of poetic style in modern English poetry, gives the highest praise to some of the sonnets and the odes *On a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*, *To a Nightingale*. "In these," he says,

"Keats was leaving behind him all traces of early mannerism, and attaining to that large utterance—combining simplicity with richness, strength with freedom and grace of movement—which was worthy of himself. The odes especially, so finished, so full of artistic beauty, flow forth into full sonorous harmonies, which leave no sense of effort. In his later poems, from behind the love of sensuous beauty, which was the groundwork of his genius, there was coming out a deeper thoughtfulness and humanity, which make us the more regret his early fate. Perhaps there is no other instance of so instinctive a yearning towards the old Hellenic life as is to be seen in Keats. His thirst for artistic beauty could find no full satisfaction in the productions of the cold north, and turned intuitively to the fair creations of the elder world, as to its native element. This is the more remarkable, as we know that Keats was so slenderly equipped with what is called scholarship that he could reach the Greek poets only through translations. His classical instinct shows itself not only in his love of Greek subjects and Greek mythology, but in his wonderful reproduction of Greek form. As we read such lines as these:

What little town by river or sea-shore,
On^o mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk this quiet morn?

or these on the nightingale's song:

The same that found a path,
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn —

we ask, What finished Greek scholar has ever so vividly recalled the manner of the Greeks?"

IV.—TENNYSON.

To the sense of beauty, which is the secret of Keats's charm, Tennyson added perfection of finish and a fuller sympathy with the problems of modern life. No poet of the century expresses so fully and adequately the spirit of his own time. All that is characteristic of the mental attitude of the second half of the nineteenth century—its democratic conservatism, its sense of imperial responsibility, its moral earnestness, its submission to science and clinging to faith—is expressed for us in Tennyson's poetry. *In Memoriam* sets forth, more clearly and powerfully than any preacher or philosopher could, the mixture of doubt and aspiration, the sense of mystery and the desire for truth, which characterize the best religious thought of the time. The religious background of the *Idylls of a King* is the same—neither that of the era of the mythical Arthur, nor that of the Middle Ages when his story was developed, but that of the reign of Queen Victoria. The vow taken by the Knights of the Round Table—

To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience; and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds
Until they won her—

this is a modern, not a mediæval ideal. Indeed, Mr. Fred-
eric Harrison makes it a reproach to Tennyson that "the

knights, from Arthur downwards, talk and act in ways with which we are familiar in modern ethical and psychological novels; but which are as impossible in real mediæval knights as a Bengal tiger or a polar bear would be in a drawing-room." But it is largely this fault (if fault it be) which made the *Idylls* appeal so directly and powerfully to the men and women of Tennyson's own generation and the young people of the generation immediately following. Perhaps, however, the real secret of Tennyson's attraction is the matchless perfection of form in which all his thought is embodied. Whether he voices the war-spirit of mid-century England and its protest against modern commercialism in *Maud*, or discusses the problem of the education of women in *The Princess*, he gives us lyrics of undying beauty. Moreover, this perfection of finish is not occasional in Tennyson; it is continuous. To again quote Mr. Frederic Harrison: "In early life he formed a poetic style of his own, of quite faultless precision—musical, simple, and lucid. And in sixty years of poetic fecundity his style may have gained in energy, but not in precision. It was never careless, never uncouth, never (or rarely) obscure. Every line was polished with the same unerring ear and the same infallible taste. In some sixty thousand lines it is rare to find a really false rhyme, a truly bungling verse, a crude confusion of epithets, or a vile cacophony—such ragged stuff as Byron flung off on almost every other page, such redundancies as Shelley or Keats would pour forth in some hour of delirious rapture, such commonplace as too often offend us in Wordsworth, even when he is not droning of malice prepense. Verses so uniformly harmonious as those of

Tennyson, with their witchery of words, yet so clear, so pure, so tender, so redolent of what is beautiful in nature, in man, in woman—all this won over the entire public that cares for poetry, and truly deserved to win it."

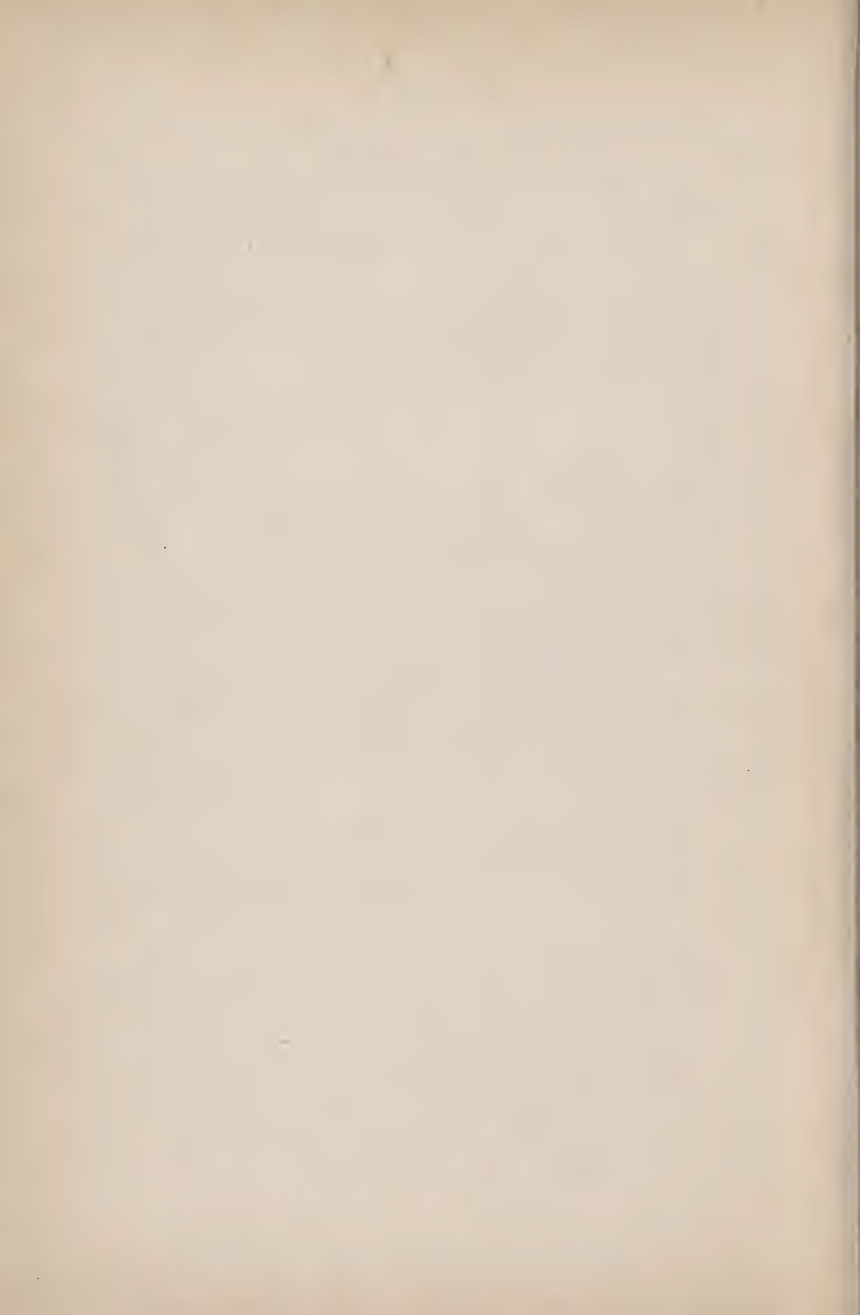
V.—BROWNING.

At first sight Browning seems to stand apart from his fellow poets of the nineteenth century. He is strikingly different from his great contemporary Tennyson. He has none of Tennyson's strong national feeling: he is rather cosmopolitan, sympathizing readily and fully with the heroic traditions of Italy and France, where much of his life was spent. While Tennyson is faultlessly perfect in form, Browning is apparently careless, or purposely rugged and grotesque. Tennyson is almost always lucid: Browning is often difficult, if not obscure. The difficulty of his works has, however, been greatly exaggerated, and objections which are true only of a small part have been applied to the whole. The obscurity complained of exists often only in the mind of the reader, and the mass of his work offers no serious obstacles to minds capable of intellectual effort. His own defence against the charge of obscurity is very much to the point: "I can have little doubt that my writing has been in the main too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game of dominoes to an idle man."

Browning's strong personality is impressed on every line he wrote, and it is impossible to mistake his work for that of anyone else. But, in spite of his peculiar mannerisms and marked individuality, he, too, belongs by right descent to the Romantic Revival. His task was to bring the spirit of romance to bear upon man in the ordinary relations of life—buying and selling, painting, composing music, ruling a kingdom, managing a political party, fighting, debating, chatting over coffee and cigars in the library, making love, writing poetry, philosophizing. It was above all the mind of man that interested him, and he exhibited it under the most diverse conditions—in every age and clime, in every rank and class of society. “The world and all its action, as a show of thought,” says Pater, “that is the scope of his work. It makes him pre-eminently a modern poet—a poet of the self-pondering, perfectly-educated modern world, which, having come to the end of all direct and purely external experiences, must necessarily turn for its entertainment to the world within.” “The men and women who live and move in that new world of his creation are as varied as life itself; they are kings and beggars, saints and lovers, great captains, poets, painters, musicians, priests and popes, Jews, gipsies and dervishes, street-girls, princesses, dancers with the wicked witchery of the daughter of Herodias, wives with the devotion of the wife of Brutus, joyous girls and malevolent gray-beards, statesmen, cavaliers, soldiers of humanity, tyrants and bigots, ancient sages and modern spiritualists, heretics, scholars, scoundrels, devotees, rabbis, persons of quality and men of low estate—men and women as multiform as nature or society has made them.” (Symons.)

Themes so varied and often remote require extensive knowledge in the reader as well as in the writer, and, quite apart from the difficulties of Browning's concise and abrupt style, his manner of treatment makes large demands upon the intelligence. "My stress," he says of *Sordello*, "lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study." A writer of Browning's intellectual grasp is not likely, with the best will in the world, to make his "study of the development of a soul" easy reading, though he may make it supremely interesting. Browning had a unique gift for enabling a character to reveal itself in speech, in solitary communings, or in the portrayal of a single situation. His poems are almost all dramatic in this sense, that they are not his own utterances, but the "utterances of so many imaginary persons." The selection made from his work for this little volume necessarily gives only a hint of what he has done. The poems chosen are for the most part simple and easily understood; if any difficulty is experienced it should disappear at the second or third reading; and no poet of the nineteenth century more amply repays careful study.

JOHN W. CUNLIFFE.



1772-1834.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole ; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean ; and of the strange things that befell ; and in what manner the Ancient Mariner came back to his own Country.

PART I.

An ancient
Mariner meet-
eth three Gal-
lants bidden to
a wedding-feast,
and detaineth
one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
 "There was a ship," quoth he. 10
 "Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child : 15
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
 He cannot choose but hear ;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner :— 20

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner
 tells how the
 ship sailed
 southward with
 a good wind and
 fair weather, till
 it reached the
 line.

“The Sun came up upon the left,
 Out of the sea came he !
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the sea. 25

“Higher and higher every day
 Till over the mast at noon”— 30
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-
 Guest heareth
 the bridal
 music ; but the
 Mariner con-
 tinueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she ;
 Nodding their heads before her goes 35
 The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

The ship drawn
 by a storm
 towards the
 south pole.

“And now the storm-blast came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong ;
 He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold :
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

The land of ice,
 and of fearful
 sounds, where
 no living thing
 was to be seen.

And through the drifts, the snowy clifts 55
 Did send a dismal sheen :
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
 The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around : 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
 Like noises in a swound !

Till a great sea-
 bird, called the
 Albatross, came
 through the
 snow-fog, and
 was received
 with great joy
 and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross :
 Thorough the fog it came ;
 As if it had been a Christian soul,
 We hailed it in God's name. 65

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
 The helmsman steered us through ! 70

And lo ! the
 Albatross
 proveth a bird
 of good omen,
 and followeth
 the ship as it
 returned north-
 ward through
 fog and floating
 ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
 It perched for vespers nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient
 Mariner inhospitably
 killeth the pious bird
 of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
 From the fiends that plague thee thus!— 80
 Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
 I shot the Albatross!"

PART II.

The Sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left 85
 Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
 But no sweet bird did follow,
 Nor any day for food or play
 Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

His shipmates
 cry out against
 the ancient
 Mariner, for
 killing the bird
 of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
 And it would work 'em woe;
 For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow.
 Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay, 95
 That made the breeze to blow!

But when the
 fog cleared off
 they justify the
 same, and thus
 make them-
 selves accom-
 plices in the
 crime.

Nor dim, nor red, like God's own head,
 The glorious Sun uprist:
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird
 That brought the fog and mist. 100
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
 That bring the fog and mist,

The fair breeze
continues ; the
ship enters the
Pacific Ocean,
and sails north-
ward, even till it
reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

105

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalm'd.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

115

And the Alba-
tross begins to
be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

120

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

A spirit had fol-
low'd them ;
one of the in-
visible inhabi-
tants of this
planet, neither

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

130

departed souls
nor angels;
concerning
whom the
learned Jew,
Josephus, and
the Platonic
Constantinopo-
litan, Michael
Psellus, may be
consulted.
They are very
numerous, and
there is no cli-
mate or element
without one or
more.

And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates,
in their sore
distress would
fain throw the
whole guilt on
the ancient
Mariner; in sign
whereof they
hang the dead
sea-bird round
his neck.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the Cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

140

PART III.

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!

145

The ancient
Mariner behold-
eth a sign in the
element afar off.

When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

150

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
And as if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged, and tacked, and veered.

155

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him to

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;

be a ship ; and
at a dear ran-
som he free'd
his speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

160

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :

A flash of joy.

Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

165

And horror fol-
lows ; for can it
be a ship that
comes onward
without wind
or tide ?

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

170

The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

175

It seemeth him
but the skele-
ton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

180

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossamers ?

And its ribs are
seen as bars on
the face of the
setting sun.
The spectre-
woman and her

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?

185

death-mate,
and no other
on board the
skeleton ship.
Like vessel, like
crew !

Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
Is Death that woman's mate ?

Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and Life-
in-Death have
diced for the
ship's crew, and
she (the latter)
winneeth the
ancient Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came, 195
And the twain were casting dice ;
" The game is done ! I've won, I've won !"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight
within the
courts of the
sun.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ; 200
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of
the moon.

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip ! 205
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star 210
Within the nether tip.

One after
another.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye. 215

His shipmates
drop down
dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on the
ancient Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

220

PART IV.

The Wedding-
guest feareth
that a spirit is
talking to him.

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

225

But the ancient
Mariner as-
sureth him of
his bodily life,
and proceedeth
to relate his
horrible pen-
ance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown.”—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
This body dropt not down.
Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

230

235

He despiseth
the creatures of
the calm.

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie ;
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

And envieth
that they should
live, and so
many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

240

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,
 A wicked whisper came, and made
 My heart as dry as dust. 245

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
 And the balls like pulses beat ;
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky, 250
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse
 liveth for him
 in the eye of
 the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 Nor rot nor reek did they :
 The look with which they looked on me 255
 Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
 A spirit from on high ;
 But oh ! more horrible than that
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye ! 260

In his loneliness
 and fixedness
 he yearneth to-
 wards the
 journeying
 moon, and the
 stars that still
 sojourn, yet still
 move onward ;
 and everywhere
 the blue sky be-
 longs to them,
 and is their
 appointed rest,
 and their native
 country and
 their own
 natural homes,
 which they enter
 unannounced,
 as lords that are
 certainly ex-
 pected, and yet
 there is a silent
 joy at their
 arrival.

Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die.

The moving moon went up the sky,
 And nowhere did abide ;
 Softly she was going up, 265
 And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
 Like April hoar-frost spread ;
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 The charmed water burnt alway 270
 A still and awful red.

By the light of
the Moon he be-
holdeth God's
creatures of the
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

275

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

280

Their beauty
and their
happiness.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare ;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware !
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

285

The spell begins
to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

290

PART V.

O sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

295

By grace of the
holy Mother,
the ancient
Mariner is re-
freshed with
rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.

300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank ;
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
 And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs : 305
 I was so light—almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth
 sounds and
 seeth strange
 sights and com-
 motions in the
 sky and the
 element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :
 It did not come anear ; 310
 But with its sound it shook the sails,
 That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life !
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
 To and fro they were hurried about ! 315
 And to and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
 And the rain poured down from one black cloud :
 The moon was at its edge. 321

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The moon was at its side :
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning fell with never a jag, 325
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies of
 the ship's crew
 are inspirited,
 and the ship
 moves on :

The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on !
 Beneath the lightning and the moon
 The dead men gave a groan. 330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered ; the ship moved on ; 335
 Yet never a breeze up-blew ;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do ;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
 We were a ghastly crew. 340

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee ;
 The body and I pulled at one rope,
 But he said nought to me.

but not by the
 souls of the
 men, nor by de-
 mons of earth
 or middle air,
 but by a blessed
 troop of angelic
 spirits, sent
 down by the in-
 vocation of the
 guardian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" 345
 Be calm thou Wedding-Guest !
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest :

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms, 350
 And clustered round the mast ;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the sun ; 355
 Slowly the sounds came back again,
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the sky-lark sing ;
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360

How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song, 365
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe ;
Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome
spirit from the
south pole
carries on the
ship as far as the
line, in obedi-
ence to the an-
gelic troop, but
still requireth
vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid ; and it was he
That made the ship to go. 380
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean ;
But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound : 390

It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

395

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

400

"The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow."

405

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?

410

SECOND VOICE.

Still as a slave before his lord,
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast—

415

If he may know which way to go ;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see ! how graciously
 She looketh down on him. 420

FIRST VOICE.

The Mariner
 hath been cast
 into a trance ;
 for the angelic
 power causeth
 the vessel to
 drive northward
 faster than
 human life
 could endure.

But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind ?

SECOND VOICE.

The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind. 425

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
 Or we shall be belated :
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.

The super-
 natural motion
 is retarded ; the
 Mariner awakes,
 and his penance
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on 430
 As in a gentle weather :
 'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter ; 435
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
 That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away :
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
 Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is
 finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more
 I viewed the ocean green,
 And looked far forth, yet little saw
 Of what had else been seen— 445

Like one, that on a lonesome road
 Doth walk in fear and dread,
 And having once turned round, walks on,
 And turns no more his head ;
 Because he knows a frightful fiend
 450
 Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
 Nor sound nor motion made :
 Its path was not upon the sea,
 In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
 Like a meadow-gale of spring—
 It mingled strangely with my fears,
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
 Yet she sailed softly too :
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
 On me alone it blew.

And the ancient
 Mariner behold-
 eth his native
 country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
 The lighthouse top I see ? 465
 Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
 Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
 And I with sobs did pray—
 'O let me be awake, my God !
 470
 Or let me sleep alway.'

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn !
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 And the shadow of the moon. 475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light, 480
Till rising from the same,

The angelic
spirits leave the
dead bodies,

Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

and appear in
their own forms
of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were : 485
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
No voice did they impart—
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast : 505
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
 It is the Hermit good !
 He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
 That he makes in the wood.
 He'll shrive me my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

PART VII.

the Hermit of
 the wood

This Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea. 515
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
 He loves to talk with mariners
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 He hath a cushion plump : 520
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
 " Why, this is strange, I trow !
 Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
 That signal made but now ? "

approacheth
 the ship
 with wonder.

" Strange, by my faith ! " the Hermit said—
 " And they answered not our cheer !
 The planks look warped ! and see those sails,
 How thin they are and sere ! 530
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
 My forest-brook along;
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
 That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
 (The Pilot made reply)
 I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!" 540
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I nor spake nor stirred;
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard. 545

The ship sud-
 denly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread:
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
 Mariner is
 saved in the
 Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat;
 But swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat. 555

Upon the whirl where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round;
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560
 And fell down in a fit;

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go, 565
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha ! ha !" quoth he, "full plain I see
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner earnestly entreateth
the Hermit to
shrieve him ;
and the penance
of life falls on
him.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !"
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou !"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ; 580
And then it left me free,

And ever and
anon through-
out his future
life an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
land ;

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
The moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me :
To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
 The wedding-guests are there ;
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are :
 And hark the little vesper bell,
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

595

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide, wide sea :
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemed there to be.

600

O sweeter than the marriage feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay !

605

and to teach, by
 his own ex-
 ample, love and
 reverence to all
 things that God
 made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
 He prayeth well who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

610

He prayeth best who loveth best
 All things both great and small ;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.

615

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,

Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest 620
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn. 625
(1797-8).

KUBLA KHAN.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree :
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea. 5
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round :
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree ;
And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15
By woman wailing for her demon-lover !
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced ;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail :
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion 25
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean :
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war ! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves ;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device, 35
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice !

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw :
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played, 40
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long, 45
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware ! Beware !
His flashing eyes, his floating hair ! 50
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

(1798).

CHRISTABEL.

(From PART II.).

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

(1800).

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

The frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,

With all the numberless goings on of life
 Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate, 15
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit 20
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
 How oft, at school, with most believing mind, 25
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
 To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
 With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang 30
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
 So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
 So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt 35
 Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
 And so I brooded all the following morn,
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
 Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched 40
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
 For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
 Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
 My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear babe, that sleepest cradled by my side, 45
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
 Fill up the interspersed vacancies
 And momentary pauses of the thought !
 My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
 With tender gladness, thus to look at thee, 50
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
 And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
 In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
 But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze 55
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
 Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
 And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear
 The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible 60
 Of that eternal language, which thy God
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach
 Himself in all, and all things in himself.
 Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould
 Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask. 65

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
 Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
 Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch 70
 Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fall
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,
 Or if the secret ministry of frost
 Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
 Quietly shining to the quiet Moon. 75

CHORAL SONG FROM "ZAPOLYA."

Up, up! ye dames, ye lasses gay!
 To the meadows trip away.
 'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,
 And scare the small birds from the corn.
 Not a soul at home may stay : 5
 For the shepherds must go
 With lance and bow
 To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
 To the cricket and the mouse : 10
 Find grannam out a sunny seat,
 With babe and lambkin at her feet.
 Not a soul at home may stay :
 For the shepherds must go
 With lance and bow 15
 To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

(1817).

HUMILITY THE MOTHER OF CHARITY.

Frail creatures are we all! To be the best.
 Is but the fewest faults to have:—
 Look thou then to thyself, and leave the rest
 To God, thy conscience, and the grave.
 (1830).

EPITAPH.

Stop, Christian passer-by!—Stop, child of God,
 And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
 A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he.—
 O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
 That he who many a year with toil of breath 5
 Found death in life, may here find life in death!
 Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame
 He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ.
 Do thou the same!

(Nov. 9, 1833).

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1770-1850.

THE PRELUDE.

(From Book I.).

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear :
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted—there were we let loose 5
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung 10
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation ;—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone, 15
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil 20
Became my prey ; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod. 25

Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge ; though mean

Our object and inglorious, yet the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung 30
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
 Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time 35
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
 Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows 40
 Like harmony in music; there is a dark
 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together
 In one society. How strange that all
 The terrors, pains, and early miseries, 45
 Regrets; vexations, lassitudes interfused
 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
 And that a needful part, in making up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end! 50
 Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
 Whether her fearless visitings, or those
 That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
 Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
 Severer interventions, ministry 55
 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
 A little boat tied to a willow tree
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in 60
 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice

Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on ;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon, 65
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, 70
The horizon's utmost boundary ; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace ; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat 75
Went heaving through the water like a swan ;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again, 80
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned, 85
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree ;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood ; but after I had seen 90
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being ; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes 95
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields ;

But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams. 100

/ Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn 105
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus 110
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me 115
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 120
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun 125
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud 130
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,

Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase 135
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle ; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ; 140
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west 145
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star 150
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain ; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still 155
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round ! 160
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

(1799-1802).

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING
THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.

Five years have past ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. – Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines 15
Of sportive wood run wild : these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

Those beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye : 25
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind, 30
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,

As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered acts 35
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight 40
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood 45
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things. 50

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world, 55
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint, 61
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again :
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts 65
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,

Though, changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
 I came among these hills ; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides 70
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led ; more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, 75
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, 80
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite ; a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past, 85
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
 Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompense. * For I have learned 90
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt 95
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air, 100
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
 A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods, 105
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense, 110
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more 115
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read 120
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make
 / Knowing that Nature never did betray 125
 • The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed 130
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb 135
 Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. / Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free
 To blow against thee : and, in after years, 140
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then, 145
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear 150
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together ; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came 155
 Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs, 160
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

(1798).

 THE RAINBOW.

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky :
 So was it when my life began ;
 So is it now I am a man ;
 So be it when I shall grow old, 5
 Or let me die !
 The Child is father of the Man ;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

(1802).

Doth every Beast keep holiday ;—
 Thou Child of Joy,
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd-boy ! 35

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make ; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal, 40

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day ! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are culling 45
 On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm :—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear ! 50
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,

A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone :
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat : 55

Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

x Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, — *metaphor*
 Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60

And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home : † 65

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close

 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows

 He sees it in his joy ;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east-
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

 And by the vision splendid

 Is on his way attended ;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

22. 1800 Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;

Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And even with something of a Mother's mind,

 And no unworthy aim,

 The homely Nurse doth all she can

To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,

 Forget the glories he hath known,

And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,

A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !

See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,

Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,

With light upon him from his father's eyes !

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life,

Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;

 A wedding or a festival,

 A mourning or a funeral,

 And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song :

 Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;

 But it will not be long

70

75

80

85

90

95

Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part ;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life bring with her in her equipage ; 105
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity ;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest, 115

Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by ; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ? 125
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

O joy ! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !

The thought of our past years in me doth breed

apostrophizing

Perpetual benediction : not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest ; 135
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise ; 140
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings ;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized, 145
 High instincts before which our mortal nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised :
 X But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may, 150
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our ~~noisy~~ ^{stable - fast - wordless} years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence, truths that wake, 155
 To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence in a season of ^{peaceful mind} calm weather
 Though inland far we be, ^{at in years}
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither, 165
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

eternity

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

And let the young Lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

170

We in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to-day

Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright 175

Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind;

180

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,

185

In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,

Forebode not any severing of our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;

I only have relinquished one delight

190

To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet;

195

✓ The Clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;

Another race hath been, and other palms are won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,

200

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

X
(1803-6).

Lyrical.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link 5
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ; 10
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure ;—
But the least motion which they made, 15
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there. 20

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

(1798).

TO MY SISTER.

It is the first mild day of March :
 Each minute sweeter than before
 The redbreast sings from the tall larch
 That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air, 5
 Which seems a sense of joy to yield
 To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
 And grass in the green field.

My sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
 Now that our morning meal is done, 10
 Make haste, your morning task resign ;
 Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you ;—and, pray,
 Put on with speed your woodland dress ;
 And bring no book : for this one day 15
 We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
 Our living calendar :
 We from to-day, my Friend, will date
 The opening of the year. 20

* Love, now a universal birth,
 From heart to heart is stealing,
 From earth to man, from man to earth ;
 —It is the hour of feeling. *

One moment now may give us more 25
 Than years of toiling reason :
 Our minds shall drink at every pore
 The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
 Which they shall long obey : 30
 We for the year to come may take
 Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
 About, below, above,
 We'll frame the measure of our souls :
 They shall be tuned to love.

35

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,
 With speed put on your woodland dress ;
 And bring no book : for this one day
 We'll give to idleness.

40

(1798).

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone

5

Half hidden from the eye !

—Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be ;
 But she is in her grave, and, oh,
 The difference to me !

10

(1799).

I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN.

I travelled among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea ;
 Nor, England ! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !

5

Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time ; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire ; 10
 And she I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
 The bowers where Lucy played ;
 And thine too is the last green field 15
 That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

(1799).

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER.

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown ;
 This Child I to myself will take,
 She shall be mine, and I will make 5
 A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse : and with me
 The Girl, in rock and plain,
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
 That wild with glee across the lawn
 Or up the mountain springs ; 15
 And hers shall be the breathing balm,
 And hers the silence and the calm
 Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
 To her ; for her the willow bend ; 20
 Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the Storm
 Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
 By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
 To her ; and she shall lean her ear
 In many a secret place
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
 And beauty born of murmuring sound
 Shall pass into her face. 30

And vital feelings of delight
 Shall rear her form to stately height,
 Her virgin bosom swell ;
 Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
 While she and I together live 35
 Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
 How soon my Lucy's race was run !
 She died, and left to me
 This heath, this calm, and quiet scene ; 40
 The memory of what has been,
 And never more will be.

(1799).

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL.

A slumber did my spirit seal ;
 I had no human fears :
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ; 5
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

(1799).

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT.

She was a Phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;
 A lovely Apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; 5
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet 15
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine:
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveller between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light. 30

(1804).

TO THE CUCKOO.

O blithe New-comer ! I have heard, -
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?

While I am lying on the grass 5
Thy twofold shout I hear ;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers, 10
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing, 15
A voice, a mystery ;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to ; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ; 25
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be 30
An unsubstantial, faery place ;
That is fit home for Thee !

THE DAFFODILS.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay; 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay, 15
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804).

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands 10
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas 15
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings !—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago : 20
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang 25
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
(The music in my heart I bore,
(Long after it was heard no more.

(1803).

PREFATORY SONNET.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room ;
 And hermits are contented with their cells ;
 And students with their pensive citadels ;
 Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
 Sit blithe and happy ; bees that soar for bloom, 5
 High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells :
 In truth the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is : and hence for me,
 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound 10
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground ;
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.
(1806).

COMPOSED ON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
 The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea : 5
 Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, 10
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
 And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.
(1802).

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.

The world is too much with us : late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ; 5
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

(1806).

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the 'morning ; silent, bare, 5
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ; 10
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
 And was the safeguard of the west : the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
 Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
 She was a maiden City, bright and free ; 5
 No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
 And, when she took unto herself a mate,
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ; 10
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
 When her long life hath reached its final day :
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
 Of that which once was great is passed away.
 (1802).

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
 One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
 In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
 They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee 5
 Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :
 Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ; 10
 For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
 That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !
 (1807).

LORD BYRON.

1788-1824.

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF HARROW ON THE HILL.

Ye scenes of my childhood, whose loved recollection
 Embitters the present, compared with the past ;
Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,
 And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last ;

Where fancy yet joys to trace the resemblance 5
 Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied ;
How welcome to me your ne'er-fading remembrance,
 Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied !

Again I revisit the hills where we sported,
 The streams where we swam, and the fields where we
 fought ; 10

The school where, loud warn'd by the bell, we resorted,
 To pore o'er the precepts by pedagogues taught.
Again I behold where for hours I have ponder'd,
 As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay ;
Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wander'd, 15
 To catch the last gleam of the sun's setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spectators surrounded,
 Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo o'erthrown ;
While, to swell my young pride, such applauses resounded,
 I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone.* 20

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,
 By my daughters of kingdom and reason deprived ;
Till, fired by loud plaudits and self-adulation,
 I regarded myself as a Garrick revived.

* Mossop, a contemporary of Garrick, famous for his performance
of Zanga.

Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you ! 25
 Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast ;
 Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you ;
 Your pleasures may still be in fancy possess.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore me,
 While fate shall the shades of the future unroll ! 30
 Since darkness o'ershadows the prospect before me,
 More dear is the beam of the past to my soul.

But if, through the course of the years which await me,
 Some new scene of pleasure should open to view,
 I will say, while with rapture the thought shall elate me, 35
 " Oh ! such were the days which my infancy knew !"
 (1806).

LACHIN Y GAIR.*

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses !
 In you let the minions of luxury rove ;
 Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,
 Though still they are sacred to freedom and love :
 Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains, 5
 Round their white summits though elements war ;
 Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
 I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah ! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd ;
 My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid ;† 10
 On chieftains long perish'd my memory ponder'd,
 As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd glade ;
 I sought not my home till the day's dying glory
 Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star ;
 For fancy was cheer'd by traditional story, 15
 Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

* *Lachin y Gair*, or, as it is pronounced in the Erse, *Loch na Garr*, towers proudly pre-eminent in the Northern Highlands, near Invercauld. Its appearance is of a dusky hue, but the summit is the seat of eternal snows. Near *Lachin y Gair* I spent some of the early part of my life, the recollection of which has given birth to these stanzas.

† This word is erroneously pronounced *plad* : the proper pronunciation (according to the Scotch) is shown by the orthography.

"Shades of the dead ! have I not heard your voices
 Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale !"
 Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
 And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale. 2℄
 Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,
 Winter presides in his cold icy car :
 Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers ;
 They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

"Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding* 25
 Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause ?"
 Ah ? were you destined to die at Culloden,†
 Victory crown'd not your fall with applause :
 Still were you happy in death's earthy slumber,
 You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar ;‡ 30
 The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
 Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
 Years must elapse ere I tread you again :
 Nature of verdure and flowers has bereft you, 35
 Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
 England ! thy beauties are tame and domestic
 To one who has roved on the mountains afar :
 Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic !
 The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr ! 40

(1806).

*I allude here to my maternal ancestors, "the *Gordons*," many of whom fought for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Pretender.

†Whether any perished in the battle of Culloden, I am not certain ; but, as many fell in the insurrection, I have used the name of the principal action, "pars pro toto."

‡A tract of the Highlands so called. There is also a Castle of Braemar.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA.

- Though the day of my destiny's over,
 And the star of my fate hath declined,
 Thy soft heart refused to discover
 The faults which so many could find ;
 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted, 5
 It shrunk not to share it with me,
 And the love which my spirit hath painted
 It never hath found but in *thee*.
- Then when nature around me is smiling,
 The last smile which answers to mine, 10
 I do not believe it beguiling,
 Because it reminds me of thine ;
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,
 As the breasts I believed in with me,
 If their billows excite an emotion, 15
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.
- Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
 Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
 To pain—it shall not be its slave. 20
 There is many a pang to pursue me :
 They may crush, but they shall not contemn ;
 They may torture, but shall not subdue me ;
 'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.
- Though human, thou didst not deceive me, 25
 Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
 Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
 Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake ;
 Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me ;
 Though parted, it was not to fly, 30
 Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
 Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
 Nor the war of the many with one :
 If my soul was not fitted to prize it, 35
 'Twas folly not sooner to shun :
 And if dearly that error hath cost me,
 And more than I once could foresee,
 I have found that, whatever it lost me,
 It could not deprive me of *thee*. 40

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,
 Thus much I at least may recall,
 It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd,
 Deserved to be dearest of all :
 In the desert a fountain is springing, 45
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,
 And a bird in the solitude singing,
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

(1816).

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

SONG FROM CANTO I.

Adieu, adieu ! my native shore
 Fades o'er the waters blue ;
 The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
 And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
 Yon sun that sets upon the sea 5
 We follow in his flight ;
 Farewell awhile to him and thee,
 My native Land—Good Night !

A few short hours, and he will rise
 To give the morrow birth ; 10
 And I shall hail the main and skies,
 But not my mother earth.
 Deserted is my own good hall,
 Its hearth is desolate ;
 Wild weeds are gathering on the wall, 15
 My dog howls at the gate.

- “Come hither, hither, my little page:
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billows’ rage,
Or tremble at the gale? 20
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye;
Our ship is swift and strong:
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.”
- “Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high 25
I fear not wave nor wind;
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love, 30
And have no friend, save these alone,
But thee—and One above.
- “My father bless’d me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh 35
Till I come back again.”—
“Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry. 40
- Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman,
Or shiver at the gale?”—
“Deem’st thou I tremble for my life? 44
Sir Childe, I’m not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake ; 50

And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make ?"—
" Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay ;
But I, who am of lighter mood, 55
Will laugh to flee away."

For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour ?
Fresh feeres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o'er. 60

For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near ?
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

And now I'm in the world alone, 65
Upon the wide, wide sea ;

But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me ?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands ; 70

But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands.

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine ;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to, 75
So not again to mine.

Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves !
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves !
My native Land—Good Night ! 80

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO III.

II.

Once more upon the waters ! yet once more !
 And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
 That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar !
 Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead !
 Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed, 5
 And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
 Still must I on ; for I am as a weed,
 Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
 Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III.

In my youth's summer I did sing of One, 10
 The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind ;
 Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
 And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
 Bears the cloud onwards : in that Tale I find
 The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears, 15
 Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
 O'er which all heavily the journeying years
 Plod the last sands of life—where not a flower appears.

IV.

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,
 Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string, 20
 And both may jar : it may be that in vain
 I would essay as I have sung to sing,
 Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,
 So that it wean me from the weary dream
 Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling 25
 Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
 To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V.

He who, grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him ; nor below 30
Can love or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance : he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell 35
Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI.

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now. 40
What am I ? Nothing : but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought ! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth. 45

VII.

Yet must I think less wildly :—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame :
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame, 50
My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late !
Yet am I changed ; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII.

Something too much of this :—but now 'tis past, 55
 And the spell closes with its silent seal.
 Long-absent Harold reappears at last :
 He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
 Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal ;
 Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd him 60
 In soul and aspect as in age : years steal
 Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb ;
 And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX.

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found
 The dregs were wormwood ; but he fill'd again, 65
 And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
 And deem'd its spring perpetual ; but in vain !
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain
 Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
 And heavy though it clank'd not ; worn with pain, 70
 Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
 Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

X.

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
 Again in fancied safety with his kind,
 And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd 75
 And sheath'd with an invulnerable mind,
 That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind ;
 And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
 Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
 Fit speculation ; such as in strange land 80
 He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI.

But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor seek
 To wear it? who can curiously behold
 The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
 Nor feel the heart can never all grow old? 85
 Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
 The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
 Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime. 90

XII.

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
 Of men to herd with man; with whom he held
 Little in common: untaught to submit
 His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
 In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd, 95
 He would not yield dominion of his mind
 To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
 Proud though in desolation; which could find
 A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends; 100
 Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
 Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
 He had the passion and the power to roam;
 The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
 Were not unto him companionship; they spake 105
 A mutual language, clearer than the tome
 Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
 For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV.

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright 110
As their own beams ; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite :
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight,
He had been happy ; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light 115
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV.

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing, 120
To whom the boundless air alone were home :
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat 125
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI.

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With naught of hope left, but with less of gloom ;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb, 130
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild—as on the plunder'd wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check. 135

XVII.

Stop ! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust !
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below !
 Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust ?
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show ?
 None ; but the moral's truth tells simpler so, 140
 As the ground was before, thus let it be ;—
 How that red rain hath made the harvest grow !
 And is this all the world has gain'd by thee,
 Thou first and last of fields ! king-making Victory ?

XVIII.

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls, 145
 The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo !
 How in an hour the power which gave annuls
 Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too !
 In "pride of place"* here last the eagle flew,
 Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain, 150
 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through ;
 Ambition's life and labours all were vain ;
 He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain.

XIX.

Fit retribution ! Gaul may champ the bit,
 And foam in fetters ;—but is Earth more free ? 155
 Did nations combat to make *One* submit ;
 Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty ?
 What ! shall reviving thralldom again be
 The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days ?
 Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we 160
 Pay the Wolf homage ? proffering lowly gaze
 And servile knees to thrones ? No ; *prove* before ye praise !

*"In pride of place" is a term of falconry, and means the highest pitch of flight. See *Macbeth*, etc.

XX.

If not, o'er one fall'n despot boast no more!
 In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with hot tears
 For Europe's flowers long rooted up before 165
 The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
 Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
 Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
 Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
 Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword 170
 Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
 And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
 Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men; 175
 A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage bell; 179
 But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
 Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
 On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
 No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
 To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.— 185
 But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
 Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII.

Within a window's niche of that high hall 190
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain ; he did hear
That sound, the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear ;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well 195
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell :
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV.

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress, 200
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness ;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated : who could guess 205
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise !

XXV.

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed, 210
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb, 215
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe ! They come !
they come !"

XXVI.

And wild and high the "Camerons' gathering" rose,
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills 220
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years, 224
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears !*

XXVII.

And Ardennes† waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas !
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass 230
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life, 235
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
 Battle's magnificently-stern array !
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent 240
 The earth is covered thick with other clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent !

* Sir Evan Cameron, and his descendant Donald, the "gentle Lochiel" of the "forty-five."

† The wood of Soignies is supposed to be a remnant of the "forest of Ardennes," famous in Boiardo's "Orlando," and immortal in Shakspeare's "As You Like It."

XXIX.

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine ;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng, 245
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song ;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along, 250
Even where the thickest of war's tempest's lower'd,
They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant
Howard !

XXX.

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give ;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree, 255
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive
With all her reckless birds upon the wing, 260
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI.

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake ; 265
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for ; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim. 270

XXXII.

They mourn, but smile at length ; and, smiling, mourn :
 The tree will wither long before it fall ;
 The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn ;
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
 In massy hoariness ; the ruin'd wall 275
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone ;
 The bars survive the captive they enthrall ;
 The day drags through though storms keep out the sun ;
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on :

XXXIII.

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass 280
 In every fragment multiplies ; and makes
 A thousand images of one that was,
 The same, and still the more, the more it breaks ;
 And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
 Living in shatter'd guise, and still, and cold, 285
 And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
 Yet withers on till all without is old,
 Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.
 (1816).

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

XI.

'Tis midnight : on the mountains brown
 The cold, round moon shines deeply down ;
 Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
 Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
 Bespangled with those isles of light, 5
 So wildly, spiritually bright ;
 Who ever gazed upon them shining,
 And turn'd to earth without repining,

Nor wish'd for wings to flee away,
 And mix with their eternal ray? 10
 The waves on either shore lay there,
 Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
 And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
 But murmur'd meekly as the brook.
 The winds were pillow'd on the waves; 15
 The banners droop'd along their staves,
 And, as they fell around them furling,
 Above them shone the crescent curling;
 And that deep silence was unbroke,
 Save where the watch his signal spoke, 20
 Save where the steed neigh'd oft and shrill,
 And echo answer'd from the hill,
 And the wide hum of that wild host
 Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
 As rose the Muezzin's voice in air 25
 In midnight call to wonted prayer;
 It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
 Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
 'Twas musical, but sadly sweet,
 Such as when winds and harp-strings meet, 30
 And take a long unmeasured tone,
 To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
 It seem'd to those within the wall
 A cry prophetic of their fall:
 It struck even the besieger's ear 35
 With something ominous and drear,
 An undefined and sudden thrill,
 Which makes the heart a moment still,
 Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
 Of that strange sense its silence framed; 40
 Such as a sudden passing bell
 Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

THE GIAOUR.

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
 Ere the first day of death is fled,
 The first dark day of nothingness,
 The last of danger and distress
 (Before Decay's effacing fingers 5
 Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
 And mark'd the mild angelic air,
 The rapture of repose that's there,
 The fix'd yet tender traits that streak
 The languor of the placid cheek, 10
 And—but for that sad shrouded eye,
 That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
 And but for that chill, changeless brow,
 Where cold Obstruction's apathy
 Appals the gazing mourner's heart, 15
 As if to him it could impart
 The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon—
 Yes, but for these and these alone,
 Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour,
 He still might doubt the tyrant's power ; 20
 So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
 The first, last look by death reveal'd !
 Such is the aspect of this shore ;
 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more !
 So coldly sweet, so deadly fair, 25
 We start, for soul is wanting there.
 Here is the loveliness in death,
 That parts not quite with parting breath ;
 But beauty with that fearful bloom,
 That hue which haunts it to the tomb, 30
 Expression's last receding ray,
 A gilded halo hovering round decay,

The farewell beam of Feeling pass'd away!
 Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth, 34
 Which gleams, but warms no more its cherish'd earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
 Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
 Was Freedom's home, or Glory's grave!
 Shrine of the mighty! can it be
 That this is all remains of thee? 40
 Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
 Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
 These waters blue that round you lave,
 O servile offspring of the free—
 Pronounce what sea, what shore is this? 45
 The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
 These scenes, their story not unknown,
 Arise, and make again your own;
 Snatch from the ashes of your sires
 The embers of their former fires; 50
 And he who in the strife expires
 Will add to theirs a name of fear,
 That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
 And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
 They too will rather die than shame: 55
 For Freedom's battle once begun,
 Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
 Though baffled oft, is ever won.
 Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
 Attest it many a deathless age! 60
 While kings, in dusty darkness hid
 Have left a nameless pyramid,
 Thy heroes, though the general doom
 Hath swept the column from their tomb,
 A mightier monument command, 65
 The mountains of their native land!

DON JUAN

SONG FROM CANTO III.

- The isles of Greece ! the isles of Greece !
 Where burning Sappho lov'd and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !
 Eternal summer gilds them yet, 5
 But all, except their sun, is set.
- The Scian and the Teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse ;
 Their place of birth alone is mute 10
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' " Islands of the Blest."
- The mountains look on Marathon
 And Marathon looks on the sea ;
 And musing there an hour alone, 15
 I dream'd that Greece might still be free ;
 For standing on the Persians' grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.
- A king sate on the rocky brow
 Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ; 20
 And ships, by thousands, lay below,
 And men in nations ;—all were his !
 He counted them at break of day—
 And when the sun set, where were they ?
- And where are they ? and where art thou, 25
 My country ? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now—
 The heroic bosom beats no more !
 And must thy lyre, so long divine,
 Degenerate into hands like mine ? 30

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
 To feel at least a patriot's shame,
 Even as I sing, suffuse my face ;
 For what is left the poet here ?
 For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

35

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest ?
 Must *we* but blush ?—Our fathers bled.
 Earth ! render back from out thy breast
 A remnant of our Spartan dead !
 Of the three hundred grant but three,
 To make a new Thermopylæ !

40

What, silent still ? and silent all ?
 Ah ! no ;—the voices of the dead
 Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
 And answer, " Let one living head,
 But one, arise,—we come, we come !"
 'Tis but the living who are dumb.

45

In vain— in vain : strike other chords ;
 Fill high the cup with Samian wine !
 Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
 And shed the blood of Scio's vine !
 Hark ! rising to the ignoble call—
 How answers each bold Bacchanal !

50

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet ;
 Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone ?
 Of two such lessons, why forget
 The nobler and the manlier one ?
 You have the letters Cadmus gave—
 Think ye he meant them for a slave ?

55

60

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
 We will not think of themes like these !
 It made Anacreon's song divine :
 He served—but served Polycrates—
 A tyrant ; but our masters then
 Were still, at least, our countrymen.

65

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best and bravest friend ;
That tyrant was Miltiades !
 Oh ! that the present hour would lend 70
 Another despot of the kind !
 Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line 75
 Such as the Doric mothers bore ;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
 They have a king who buys and sells : 80
 In native swords, and native ranks,
 The only hope of courage dwells ;
 But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
 Would break your shield, however broad ;

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine ! 85
 Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
 I see their glorious black eyes shine ;
 But gazing on each glowing maid,
 My own the burning tear-drop laves,
 To think such breasts must suckle slaves. 90

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
 Where nothing, save the waves and I,
 May hear our mutual murmurs sweep ;
 There, swan-like, let me sing and die :
 A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine— 95
 Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !

SONNET ON CHILLON.

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind !
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd— 5
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod, 10
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard ! May none those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

(1816).

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR.

MISSOLONGHI, Jan. 22, 1824.

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move :
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love !
My days are in the yellow leaf ; 5
The flowers and fruits of love are gone ;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone !
The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle ; 10
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile !

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share, 15
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow. 20

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see !
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake ! (not Greece—she *is* awake !)
Awake, my spirit ! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home. 25

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood !—unto thee 30
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live* ?
The land of honourable death
Is here :—up to the field, and give 35
Away thy breath !

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best ;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest. 40

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

1792-1822.

TO A SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire ;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run ;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. 15

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel, that it is there. 25

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not ;
 What is most like thee ?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see,
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. 35

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not : 40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower : 45

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view : 50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too sweet these heavy-winged thieves : 55

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass : 60

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. 65

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ? 75

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ? 85

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not :
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught ;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. 90

Yet, if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear ;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near. 95

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground ! 100

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now. 105
 (1820).

TO KAL

Music, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory—
 Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, 5
 Are heaped for the belovèd's bed ;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

(1821).

THE CLOUD.

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken 5
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under, 10
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.
I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white, 15
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits ; 20
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea ;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills, 25
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains ;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30
The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead.

As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And, when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden, 45
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer ;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, 55
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds, my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, 65
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,

When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ; 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky :
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ; 75
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

(1820).

SONNET.—OZYMANDIAS.

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said : " Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed :
And on the pedestal these words appear :
' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair !'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

(1817).

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES.

- The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright,
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might,
 The breath of the moist earth is light, 5
 Around its unexpanded buds ;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
 The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.
- I see the deep's untrampled floor 10
 With green and purple sea-weeds strown ;
 I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved, in star-showers thrown :
 I sit upon the sands alone,
 The lightning of the noontide ocean 15
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
 How sweet ! did any heart now share in my emotion.
- Alas ! I have not hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory crowned—
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
 Others I see whom these surround— 25
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure ;—
 To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.
- Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are ;
 I could lie down like a tired child, 30
 And weep away the life of care

Which I have borne and yet must bear,
 Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea 35
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
 Insults with this untimely moan ; 40
 They might lament—for I am one
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet. 45
 (1818).

ARETHUSA.

Arethusa arose
 From her couch of snows
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
 From cloud and from crag,
 With many a jag, 5
 Shepherding her bright fountains.
 She leapt down the rocks,
 With her rainbow locks
 Streaming among the streams ;—
 Her steps paved with green 10
 The downward ravine
 Which slopes to the western gleams :
 And gliding and springing
 She went, ever singing,
 In murmurs as soft as sleep ; 15
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
 As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
 On his glacier cold, 20
 With his trident the mountains strook
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks ;—with the spasm
 All Erymanthus shook.
 And the black south wind 25
 It concealed behind
 The urns of the silent snow,
 And earthquake and thunder
 Did rend in sunder
 The bars of the springs below. 30
 The beard and the hair
 Of the River-god were
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,
 As he followed the light
 Of the fleet nymph's flight 35
 To the brink of the Dorian deep.
 —
 “ Oh save me ! Oh guide me !
 And bid the deep hide me,
 For he grasps me now by the hair ! ”
 The loud Ocean heard, 40
 To its blue depth stirred,
 And divided at her prayer ;
 And under the water
 The Earth's white daughter
 Fled like a sunny beam ; 45
 Behind her descended
 Her billows, unblended
 With the brackish Dorian stream :—
 Like a gloomy stain
 On the emerald main 50
 Alpheus rushed behind,—
 As an eagle pursuing
 A dove to its ruin
 Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers	55
Where the Ocean Powers	
Sit on their pearled thrones,	
Through the coral woods	
Of the weltering floods,	
Over heaps of unvalued stones ;	60
Through the dim beams	
Which amid the streams	
Weave a network of coloured light ;	
And under the caves, .	
Where the shadowy waves	65
Are as green as the forest's night :—	
Outspeeding the shark,	
And the sword-fish dark,	
Under the ocean foam,	
And up through the rifts	70
Of the mountain cliffs	
They passed to their Dorian home.	
And now from their fountains	
In Enna's mountains,	
Down one vale where the morning basks,	75
Like friends once parted	
Grown single-hearted,	
They ply their watery tasks.	
At sunrise they leap	
From their cradles steep	80
In the cave of the shelving hill ;	
At noontide they flow	
Through the woods below	
And the meadows of asphodel ;	
And at night they sleep	85
In the rocking deep	
Beneath the Ortygian shore,—	
Like spirits that lie	
In the azure sky,	
When they love but live no more.	90

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

*tango
nina*

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O, thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

5

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill :

10

Wild Spirit which art moving everywhere ;
 Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O, hear !

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion, 15
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
 Vaulted with all thy congregated night

25

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst : O, hear !

Effect of West Wind on Earth

Effect of West Wind on Heaven

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams

The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a punice isle in Baia's bay, *is of ocean region in which sea*
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers 35

So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below *Effect of wind in Ocean*
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;

If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even

I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,

As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.

Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:

What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone, 60
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
 And, by the incantation of this verse, - 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70
 (1819).

TO —.

One word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it.
 One hope is too like despair 5
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not 10
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not:
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar 15
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

(1821).

THE QUESTION.

I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay 5
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth, 10
The constellated flower that never sets ;
Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with heaven's collected tears, 15
When the low wind, its playmate's voice it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured may,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day ; 20
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;
And flowers, azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge 25
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ; 30
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
 I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
 That the same hues which in their natural bowers 35
 Were mingled or opposed, the like array
 Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
 Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
 I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
 That I might there present it—oh! to whom? 40
(1820).

A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCHYARD, LECHLADE,
 GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
 And pallid evening twines its beaming hair
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day:
 Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men, 5
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
 Light, sound, and motion, own the potent sway,
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery. 10
 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, ærial pile, whose pinnacles
 Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
 Obey'st in silence their sweet solemn spells, 15
 Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
 Around whose lessening and invisible height
 Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
 And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound, 20
 Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,

Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
 And mingling with the still night and mute sky,
 Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild 25
 And terrorless as this serenest night:
 Here could I hope, like some enquiring child
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. 30
 (1815).

TO NIGHT.

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear 5
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought,
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day; 10
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15
 I sighed for thee;
 When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
 And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
 And the weary Day turned to his rest,
 Lingering like an unloved guest, 20
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee, 25
 Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon— 30
 Sleep will come when thou art fled.
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon! 35

(1821).

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

Orphan hours, the year is dead,
 Come and sigh, come and weep!—
 Merry hours, smile instead,
 For the year is but asleep.
 See, it smiles as it is sleeping, 5
 Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
 In its coffin in the clay,
 So white winter, that rough nurse,
 Rocks the dead-cold year to-day; 10
 Solemn hours! wail aloud
 For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
 The tree-swung cradle of a child,
 So the breath of these rude days 15

Rocks the year :—be calm and mild,
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,

Like a sexton by her grave ; 20

February bears the bier ;

March with grief doth howl and rave ;

And April weeps—but, O, ye hours !

Follow with May's fairest flowers.

(1821).

CHORUSES FROM "HELLAS."

In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurled
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,

And all its banded anarchs fled,

Like vultures frightened from Imaus, 5

Before an earthquake's tread.—

So from Time's tempestuous dawn

Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—

Thermopylæ and Marathon

Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted, 10

The springing fire.—The wingèd glory

On Philippi half alighted,

Like an eagle on a promontory.

Its unwearied wings could fan

The quenchless ashes of Milan. 15

From age to age, from man to man,

It lived ; and lit from land to land,

Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell ; and, as from night,

Re-assuming fiery flight, 20

From the West swift freedom came,

Against the course of Heaven and doom,

In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go :
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws, receive, 60
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A Power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror came ;
Like a triumphal path he trod 65
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light ;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery, came, 70
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight.
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set :
While, blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon 75
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And Day peeps forth with her blank eyes ; 80
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem :
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove, 85
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them ;
Our hills and seas and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years. 90

* * * * *

The world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam 95
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning star. 100
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize ;
 Another Orpheus sings again, 105
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

O, write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be ! 110
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free :
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise, 115
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime ;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give. 120

Saturn and Love their long repose
 Shall burst, more bright and good
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued:
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers, 125
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy. 130
 The world is weary of the past,
 Oh might it die or rest at last!

(1821).

LINES: WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED.

When the lamp is shattered
 The light in the dust lies dead—
 When the cloud is scattered
 The rainbow's glory is shed.
 When the lute is broken, 5
 Sweet tones are remembered not;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
 Survive not the lamp and the lute, 10
 The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute:—
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges 15
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest. 20
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee 25
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

(1822).

JOHN KEATS.

1795-1821.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine 5
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood 10
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till 15
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine, 20
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern, 25
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told 5
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken; 10
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

(1816).

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
 But being too happy in thy happiness,—
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

O, for a draught of vintage, that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim : 20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee! tender is the night, 35
 And hapy the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown 39
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ; 45
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
 Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen ; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy !
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music :—do I wake or sleep ? 80

(1819).

Presentation
ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape 5
Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe, or the dales of Arcady?

district in Greece

valley in Greece What men or gods are these? what maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? 10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone: ✕

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave 15

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?

What little town by river or sea-shore, 35
Or mountain built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn ?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40

made in Attica O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede *relief work, raised*
Of marble men and maidens overwrought, *or sometimes mean*
With forest branches and the trodden weed ; *embroidered*

Thou, silent form ! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral ✓ 45

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all .

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. 50

(1819).

TO AUTUMN.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees, 5

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease, 10

For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ; 15
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ; 20
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river salallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn, 30
 Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(1819).

STANZAS.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity :
 The north cannot undo them 5
 With a sleety whistle through them,
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook, 10
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look ;
 But, with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting 15
 About the frozen time.

Ah, would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy !
 But were there ever any
 Writhed not at passed joy ? 20
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numb'd sense to steel it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

A BALLAD.

I.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering ?
 The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

II.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, 5
 So haggard and so woe-begone ?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

III.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew, 10
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

IV.

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light, 15
And her eyes were wild.

V.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

VI.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

VII.

"She found me roots of relish sweet, 25
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true.'

VIII.

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore, 30
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

"And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd 35
On the cold hill's side.

X.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!' 40

XI.

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

"And is this why I sojourn here, 45
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

(1819).

Descriptive & Narrative Poem
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES. *Later Middle Ages.*

I.

Scene—Medieval Castle

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told 5
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ; 10
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Imprisoned in black, purgatorial rails : 15
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor :
But no—already had his death-bell rung ;
The joys of all his life were said and sung :
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
Another way he went, and soon among 25
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests, 35
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuff'd in youth, with triumphs gay 40
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole thoughted, to one lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare. 45

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright ; 50
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline : 55
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60
 And back retired ; not cooled by high disdain,
 But she saw not ; her heart was otherwhere :
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short : 65
 The hallowed hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with fairy fancy : all amort, 70
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire 75
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, 85
 Hyena foemen, and hot blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy in that mansion foul, — *Heavily - loaded*
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland. 95
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
 They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race !

XII.

"Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ; 100
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me ! flit !
 Flit like a ghost away."—" Ah, Gossip dear, 105
 We're safe enough ; here in this armchair sit,
 And tell me how "—" Good Saints ! not here, not here ;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII.

He followed through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ; 110
 And as she mutter'd, " Well-a—well-a-day !"
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 " Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
 " O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

" St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes' Eve :
 God's help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays
 This very night : good angels her deceive ! 125
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laughèd in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book, 130
 As spectacled she sits in chimney-nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
 "A cruel man and impious thou art: 140
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII.

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear," 145
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears; 150
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
 And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves
 and bears."

XVIII.

"Ah, why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, 155
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
 So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy 165
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met, 170
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour-frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare, 175
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, 185
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade, 190
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led 195
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No utter'd syllable, 'or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ; 205
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imageries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, 215
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. 225

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees : 230
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, 235
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ; 240
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress, 245
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness :
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breathed himself : then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stopt, *Anachronism*
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast she slept.

XXIX.

Then, by the bed-side, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and half-anguish'd, threw thereon 255
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
 O for some drowsy Morpheap amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :— 260
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ; 265
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon ;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon. 270

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.— 275
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite;
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm 280
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies: 285
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
 So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and in chords that tenderest be, 290
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call'd “La belle dame sans mercy:”
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly 295
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd 300
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye, 305
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro !" said she, "but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear : 310
 How changed thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go." 315

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose :
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark ; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet : 325
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
 "No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine—
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ? 330
 I curse not, for mine heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

"My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ? 335
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped, and vermeil-dyed ?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famish'd pilgrim, saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX.

"Hark ! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;— 345
 The bloated wassailers will never heed :—
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be, 350
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears -
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.— 355
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide ;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, 365
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide ;—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;—
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago 370
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old 375
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

A PROPHECY.

To his brother George in America.

'Tis the witching hour of night,
Orbed is the moon and bright,
And the stars they glisten, glisten,
Seeming with bright eyes to listen—

For what listen they? 5

For a song and for a charm,
See they glisten in alarm,
And the moon is waxing warm

To hear what I shall say.

Moon! keep wide thy golden ears— 10

Hearken, stars! and hearken, spheres:—

Hearken, thou eternal sky!

I sing an infant's lullaby,

A pretty lullaby.

Listen, listen, listen, listen, 15

Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,

And hear my lullaby!

Though the rushes that will make

Its cradle still are in the lake—

Though the linen that will be 20

Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—

Though the woollen that will keep

It warm, is on the silly sheep— ~~A simple, unoffensive~~

Listen, starlight, listen, listen,

Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten, 25

And hear my lullaby!

Child, I see thee! Child, I've found thee

Midst of the quiet all around thee!

Child, I see thee! Child, I spy thee!

And thy mother sweet is nigh thee! 30

Child, I know thee! Child no more,

But a Poet evermore!

See, see, the lyre, the lyre,
 In a flame of fire,
 Upon the little cradle's top 35
 Flaring, flaring, flaring,
 Past the eyesight's bearing.
 Awake it from its sleep,
 And see if it can keep
 Its eyes upon the blaze— 40
 Amaze, amaze !
 It stares, it stares, it stares,
 It dares what no one dares !
 It lifts its little hand into the flame
 Unharm'd, and on the strings 45
 Paddles a little tune, and sings,
 With dumb endeavour sweetly—
 Bard art thou completely !
 Little child
 O' the western wild, 50
 Bard art thou completely !
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour,
 A poet now or never,
 Little child
 O' th' western wild! 55
 A poet now or never !

1818).

ROBERT BROWNING.

1812-1889.

SONGS FROM "PIPPA PASSÈS."

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew-pearled :
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn :
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world !

5

* * * * *

Give her but a least excuse to love me !
When—where —
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me ?
("Hist"—said Kate the queen ;
But "Oh—" cried the maiden, binding her tresses, 15
"Tis only a page that carols unseen,
"Crumbling your hounds their messes !")

Is she wronged ?—To the rescue of her honour,
My heart !
Is she poor ?—What costs it to be styled a donor ? 20
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part !
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her !
("Nay, list,"—bade Kate the queen ;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses.
"Tis only a page that carols unseen 25
"Fitting your hawks their jesses !")

(1841).

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

Oh, to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf 5
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England — now !

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows ! 10
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent sprays edge—
 That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture 15
 The first fine careless rapture !
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower ! 20
 (1845).

“DE GUSTIBUS—”

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
 (If our loves remain)
 In an English lane,
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice— 5
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
 Making love, say,—
 The happier they !
 Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,

And let them pass, as they will too soon, 10
 With the beanflowery boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled, 15
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
 (If I get my head from out the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
 And come again to the land of lands)— 20
 In a sea-side house to the farther South,
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
 And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,
 Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er-crusted, 25
 My sentinel to guard the sands
 To the water's edge. For, what expands
 Before the house, but the great opaque
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?
 While, in the house, forever crumbles 30
 Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
 From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
 A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
 Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
 And says there's news to-day—the king 35
 Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
 Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
 —She hopes they have not caught the felons.
 Italy, my Italy!
 Queen Mary's saying serves for me— 40
 (When fortune's malice
 Lost her Calais)—
 Open my heart and you will see
 Graved inside of it, "Italy."
 Such lovers old are I and she: 45
 So it always was, so shall ever be!

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

That second time they hunted me
 From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
 And Austria, hounding far and wide
 Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
 Breathed hot and instant on my trace,— 5
 I made six days a hiding-place
 Of that dry green old aqueduct
 Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
 The fire-flies from the roof above,
 Bright creeping through the moss they love: 10
 —How long it seems since Charles was lost!
 Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
 The country in my very sight;
 And when that peril ceased at night,
 The sky broke out in red dismay 15
 With signal fires; well, there I lay
 Close covered o'er in my recess,
 Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
 Thinking on Metternich our friend,
 And Charles's miserable end, 20
 And much beside, two days; the third,
 Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
 The peasants from the village go
 To work among the maize; you know,
 With us in Lombardy, they bring 25
 Provisions packed on mules, a string
 With little bells that cheer their task,
 And casks, and boughs on every cask
 To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
 These I let pass in jingling line, 30
 And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
 The peasants from the village, too;
 For at the very rear would troop

Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed, 35
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced around,
And saw me beckon from the ground; 40
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath: they disappeared: 45
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy; 50
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay, 55
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood, 60
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate 65
The Austrians over us: the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—

If you betray me to their clutch,
 And be your death, for aught I know,
 If once they find you saved their foe. 70
 Now, you must bring me food and drink,
 And also paper, pen and ink,
 And carry safe what I shall write
 To Padua, which you'll reach at night
 Before the duomo shuts; go in, 75
 And wait till Tenebræ begin;
 Walk to the third confessional,
 Between the pillar and the wall,
 And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
 Say it a second time, then cease; 80
 And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and freedom; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip
 My letter where you placed your lip;
 Then come back happy we have done 85
 Our mother service—I, the son,
 As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
 In the same place, with the same eyes:
 I was no surer of sunrise 90
 Than of her coming. We conferred
 Of her own prospects, and I heard
 She had a lover—stout and tall,
 She said—then let her eyelids fall,
 "He could do much"—as if some doubt 95
 Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
 "She could not speak for others, who
 Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
 And so she brought me drink and food.
 After four days, the scouts pursued 100
 Another path; at last arrived

The help my Paduan friends contrived
 To furnish me : she brought the news.
 For the first time I could not choose
 But kiss her hand, and lay my own 105
 Upon her head—"This faith was shown
 To Italy, our mother ; she
 Uses my hand and blesses thee."
 She followed down to the sea-shore ;
 I left and never saw her more. 110

How very long since I have thought
 Concerning—much less wished for—aught
 Beside the good of Italy,
 For which I live and mean to die !
 I never was in love ; and since 115
 Charles proved false, what shall now convince
 My inmost heart I have a friend ?
 However, if I pleased to spend
 Real wishes on myself—say, three—
 I know at least what one should be. 120
 I would grasp Metternich until
 I felt his red wet throat distil
 In blood through these two hands. And next
 —Nor much for that am I perplexed --
 Charles, perjured traitor, for his part, 125
 Should die slow of a broken heart
 Under his new employers. Last
 —Ah, there, what should I wish ? For fast
 Do I grow old and out of strength,
 If I resolved to seek at length 130
 My father's house again, how scared
 They all would look, and unprepared !
 My brothers live in Austria's pay
 —Disowned me long ago, men say ;
 And all my early mates who used 135

To praise me so—perhaps induced
 More than one early step of mine—
 Are turning wise: while some opine
 “Freedom grows license,” some suspect
 “Haste breeds delay,” and recollect 140
 They always said, such premature
 Beginnings never could endure!
 So, with a sullen “All’s for best,”
 The land seems settling to its rest.
 I think then, I should wish to stand 145
 This evening in that dear, lost land,
 Over the sea the thousand miles,
 And know if yet that woman smiles
 With the calm smile; some little farm
 She lives in there, no doubt; what harm 150
 If I sat on the door-side bench,
 And, while her spindle made a trench
 Fantastically in the dust,
 Inquired of all her fortunes—just
 Her children’s ages and their names, 155
 And what may be the husband’s aims
 For each of them. I’d talk this out,
 And sit there, for an hour about,
 Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
 Mine on her head, and go my way. 160

So much for idle wishing—how
 It steals the time! To business now.

(1845).

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon;

Regensburg, Bavaria

A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how, 5
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall, 10
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew 15
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect— 20
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace 25
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire, 30
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed ; but presently
 Softened itself, as sheathes
 A film the mother-eagle's eye 35
 When her bruised eaglet breathes ;
 "You're wounded !" "Nay," the soldier's pride
 Touched to the quick, he said :
 "I'm killed, Sire !" And his chief beside,
 Smiling the boy fell dead. 40
(1842).

HERVÉ RIEL.

I.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
 Did the English fight the French,—woe to France !
 And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
 Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
 Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance, 5
 With the English fleet in view.

II.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase ;
 First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfre-
 ville ;
 Close on him fled, great and small,
 Twenty-two good ships in all ; 10
 And they signalled to the place
 "Help the winners of a race !
 Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker
 still,
 Here's the English can and will !"

III.

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board ;
 " Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass ?"
 laughed they : 16

"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred
 and scored,
 Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty guns
 Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
 Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons, 20
 And with flow at full beside?
 Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
 Reach the mooring? Rather say,
 While rock stands or water runs,
 Not a ship will leave the bay!" 25

IV.

Then was called a council straight.
 Brief and bitter the debate:
 "Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take
 in tow
 All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
 For a prize to Plymouth Sound? 30
 Better run the ships aground!"
 (Ended Damfreville his speech).
 "Not a minute more to wait!
 Let the Captains all and each
 Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
 France must undergo her fate. 36

V.

"Give the word!" But no such word
 Was ever spoke or heard;
 For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
 —A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third? 40
 No such man of mark, and meet
 With his betters to compete!
 But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the
 fleet,
 A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI.

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cried Hervé
Riel: 45

"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or
rogues?

Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings,
tell

On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
"Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disem-
bogues?

Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day, 51

Have I piloted your bay,

Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.

Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than
fifty Hogues!

Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me
there's a way! 55

Only let me lead the line,

Have the biggest ship to steer,

Get this 'Formidable' clear,

Make the others follow mine,

And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well, 60

Right to 'Solidor past Grève,

And there lay them safe and sound;

And if one ship misbehave,

—Keel so much as grate the ground,

Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries
Hervé Riel. 65

VII.

Not a minute more to wait.

"Steer us in, then, small and great!

Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its
chief.

Captains, give the sailor place !

He is Admiral, in brief.

70

Still the north-wind, by God's grace !

See the noble fellow's face

As the big ship, with a bound,

Clears the entry like a hound,

Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the wide sea's
profound !

75

See, safe through shoal and rock,

How they follow in a flock,

Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,

Not a spar that comes to grief !

The peril, see, is past,

80

All are harboured to the last,

And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor !"—sure as fate,

Up the English come—too late !

VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm :

They see the green trees wave

85

On the heights o'erlooking Grève.

Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.

"Just our rapture to enhance,

Let the English rake the bay,

Gnash their teeth and glare askance

90

As they cannonade away !

'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance !"

How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance !

Out burst all with one accord,

"This is Paradise for Hell !

95

Let France, let France's King

Thank the man that did the thing !"

What a shout, and all one word,

"Hervé Riel !"

As he stepped in front once more, 100
 Not a symptom of surprise
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,
 Just the same man as before.

IX.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
 I must speak out at the end, 105
 Though I find the speaking hard.
 Praise is deeper than the lips:
 You have saved the king his ships,
 You must name your own reward.
 'Faith, our sun was near eclipse! 110
 Demand whate'er you will,
 France remains your debtor still.
 Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfre-
 ville."

X.

Then a beam of fun outbroke
 On the bearded mouth that spoke, 115
 As the honest heart laughed through
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
 "Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty's done,
 And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a
 run? 120
 Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
 Since the others go ashore—
 Come! A good whole holiday!
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
 That he asked and that he got,—nothing more. 125

XI.

Name and deed alike are lost:
 Not a pillar nor a post
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell:

Not a head in white and black

On a single fishing-smack,

130

In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack

All that France saved from the fight whence England bore
the bell.

Go to Paris : rank on rank

Search the heroes flung pell-mell

On the Louvre, face and flank !

135

You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.

So, for better and for worse,

Hervé Riel, accept my verse !

In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more

Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife the Belle
Aurore !

140

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(1871).

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.

PROLOGUE.

Such a starved bank of moss

Till, that May-morn,

Blue ran the flash across :

Violets were born !

Sky—what a scowl of cloud

5

Till, near and far,

Ray on ray split the shroud :

Splendid, a star !

World—how it walled about

Life with disgrace

10

Till God's own smile came out :

That was thy face !

EPILOGUE.

What a pretty tale you told me
 Once upon a time
 — Said you found it somewhere (scold me!) 15
 Was it prose or was it rhyme,
 Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
 While your shoulder propped my head.

Anyhow there's no forgetting
 This much if no more, 20
 That a poet (pray, no petting!)
 Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,
 Went where suchlike used to go,
 Singing for a prize, you know.

Well, he had to sing, nor merely 25
 Sing but play the lyre;
 Playing was important clearly
 Quite as singing: 'I desire,
 Sir, you keep the fact in mind
 For a purpose that's behind. 30

There stood he, while deep attention
 Held the judges round,
 — Judges able, I should mention,
 To detect the slightest sound
 Sung or played amiss: such ears 35
 Had old judges, it appears!

None the less he sang out boldly,
 Played in time and tune,
 Till the judges, weighing coldly
 Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon, 40
 Sure to smile "In vain one tries
 Picking faults out: take the prize!"

When, a mischief! Were they seven
Strings the lyre possessed?
Oh, and afterwards eleven, 45
Thank you! Well, sir,—who had guessed
Such ill luck in store?—it happed
One of those same seven strings snapped.

All was lost then! No! a cricket
(What “cicada”? Pooh!) 50
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music—flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

So that when (Ah, joy!) our singer 55
For his truant string
Feels with disconcerted finger,
What does cricket else but fling
Fiery heart forth, sound the note
Wanted by the throbbing throat? 60

Ay and, ever to the ending,
Cricket chirps at need,
Executes the hand's intending,
Promptly, perfectly,—indeed
Saves the singer from defeat 65
With her chirrup low and sweet.

Till, at ending, all the judges
Cry with one assent
“Take the prize—a prize who grudges
Such a voice and instrument? 70
Why, we took your lyre for harp,
So it shrilled us forth F sharp!”

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,
 Once its service done ?
 That's no such uncommon feature 75
 In the case when Music's son
 Finds his Lotte's power too spent
 For aiding soul-development.

No ! This other on returning
 Homeward, prize in hand, 80
 Satisfied his bosom's yearning :
 (Sir, I hope you understand !)
 —Said "Some record there must be
 Of this cricket's help to me !"

So, he made himself a statue : 85
 Marble stood, life-size ;
 On the lyre, he pointed at you,
 Perched his partner in the prize ;
 Never more apart you found
 Her, he throned, from him, she crowned. 90

That's the tale : its application ?
 Somebody I know
 Hopes one day for reputation
 Through his poetry that's — Oh,
 All so learned and so wise 95
 And deserving of a prize !

If he gains one, will some ticket,
 When his statue's built,
 Tell the gazer " 'Twas a cricket
 Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt 100
 Sweet and low, when strength usurped
 Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped ?

“For as victory was nighest,
 While I sang and played,—
 With my lyre at lowest, highest, 105
 Right alike,—one string that made
 ‘Love’ sound soft was snapt in twain,
 Never to be heard again,—

“Had not a kind cricket fluttered,
 Perched upon the place 110
 Vacant left, and duly uttered
 ‘Love, Love, Love,’ whene’er the bass
 Asked the treble to atone
 For its somewhat sombre drone.”

But you don’t know music! Wherefore 115
 Keep on casting pearls
 To a—poet? All I care for
 Is—to tell him that a girl’s
 “Love” comes aptly in when gruff
 Grows his singing. (There, enough!) 120

*(The quotations from Mr. Browning’s works are included
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THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
 That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
 Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
 Shall find performed thy special ministry,
 And time come for departure, thou, suspending, 5
 Thy flight, may’st see another child for tending,
 Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
 From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
 —And suddenly my head is covered o’er 10

With those wings, white above the child who prays
 Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
 Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding
 Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

I would not look up thither past thy head 15
 Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
 For I should have thy gracious face instead,
 Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou bend me low
 Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
 And lift them up to pray, and gently tether 20
 Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread ?

If this were ever granted, I would rest
 My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
 Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
 Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands, 25
 Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
 Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
 And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired !
 I think how I should view the earth and skies 30
 And sea, when once again my brow was bared
 After thy healing, with such different eyes.
 O world, as God has made it ! All is beauty :
 And knowing this, is love ; and love is duty.
 What further may be sought for or declared ? 35

MEM.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
 (Alfred, dear friend !)—that little child to pray,
 Holding the little hands up, each to each
 Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
 Over the earth where so much lay before him 40
 Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
 And he was left at Fano by the beach.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
 To sit and see him in his chapel there,
 And drink his beauty to our soul's content 45
 —My angel with me too: and since I care
 For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power 17th Century
 And glory comes this picture for a dower,
 Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

And since he did not work thus earnestly 50
 At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
 I took one thought his picture struck from me,
 And spread it out, translating it to song.
 My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
 How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end? 55
 This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

(1855).

*Dramatic Monologue*ANDREA DEL SARTO. of 16th *Century*

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER." 1487-1531

But do not let us quarrel any more,
 No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish. *Submission*
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart? *of A.D.S.*
 I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear, 5
 Treat his own subject after his own way,
 Fix his own time, accept too, his own price,
 And shut the money into this small hand
 When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
 Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love! 10
 I often am much wearier than you think,
 This evening more than usual, and it seems
 As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
 Here by the window with your hand in mine
 And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole, 15

Both of one mind, as married people use,
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,
 I might get up to-morrow to my work
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! 20
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
 Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
 For each of the five pictures we require:
 It saves a model. So! keep looking so— 25
 My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!
 —How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
 Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks—no one's; very dear, no less.
 You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
 There's what we painters call our harmony!
 A common grayness silvers everything,— 35
 All in a twilight, you and I alike
 —You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;
 My youth, my hope, my heart, being all toned down
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. 40
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
 The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in everything. 45
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
 How strange now looks the life he makes us lead; 50

} So free we seem, so fettered fast we are !
 I feel he laid the fetter : let it lie !
 This chamber for example—turn your head—
 All that's behind us ! You don't understand
 Nor care to understand about my art, 55
 But you can hear at least when people speak :
 And that cartoon, the second from the door
 —It is the thing, Love ! so such thing should be—
 Behold Madonna !—I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
 What I see, what at bottom of my heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
 Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
 I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are judge,
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last week, 65
 And just as much they used to say in France.
 At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it !
 No sketches first, no studies, that's long past :
 I do what many dream of all their lives,
 —Dream ? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70
 And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
 On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
 Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
 To paint a little thing like that you smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,— 75
 Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
 (I know his name, no matter) —so much less !
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia : I am judged.
 } There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain, 80
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough. 85

Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
 The sudden blood of these men! at a word
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
 I, painting from myself, and to myself, 90
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
 Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
 Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that? 95
 Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
 { Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
 * Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
 I know both what I want and what might gain, 100
 And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
 "Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
 Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
 The Urbinate who died five years ago. *Raphael* 105
 ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
 Above and through his art—for it gives way; 110
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
 He means right—that, a child may understand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it: 115
 But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think— 120

More than I merit, yes, by many times.
 But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare — 125
 Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind !
 Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
 " God and the glory ! never care for gain.
 The present by the future, what is that ?
 Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo ! 130
 Rafael is waiting : up to God, all three !"
 I might have done it for you. So it seems :
 Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's self ;
 The rest avail not. Why do I need you ? 135
 What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo ?
 In this world, who can do a thing, will not ;
 And who would do it, cannot, I perceive :
 Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
 And thus we half-men struggle. At the end, 140
 God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
 'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
 That I am something underrated here,
 Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
 I dared not, do you know, leave home all day, 145
 For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
 The best is when they pass and look aside ;
 But they speak sometimes ; I must bear it all.
 Well may they speak ! That Francis, that first time,
 And that long festal year at Fontainebleau ! 150
 I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
 Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
 In that humane great monarch's golden look, —
 One finger in his beard or twisted curl
 Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile, 155

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
 The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
 I painting proudly with his breath on me,
 All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
 Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls 160
 Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
 And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
 This in the background, waiting on my work,
 To crown the issue with a last reward!
 A good time, was it not, my kingly days, 165
 And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
 'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
 Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
 Out of the grange whose four walls make his world. 170
 How could it end in any other way?
 You called me, and I came home to your heart.
 The triumph was—to reach and stay there: since
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
 Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold, 175
 You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
 The Roman's is the better when you pray,
 But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge 180
 Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
 My better fortune, I resolve to think.
 For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
 Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . . 185
 (When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
 Too lifted up in heart because of it)
 "Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
 Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how, 190

Who, were he set to plan and execute
 As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
 Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
 To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
 I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, 195
 Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
 Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
 (What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
 Do you forget already words like those?) 200
 If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
 Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
 Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
 This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
 If you would sit thus by me every night 205
 I should work better, do you comprehend?
 I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
 See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
 Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
 The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. 210
 Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
 Inside the melancholy little house
 We built to be so gay with. God is just.
 King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
 When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, 215
 The walls become illumined, brick from brick
 Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
 That gold of his I did cement them with!
 Let us but love each other. Must you go?
 That Cousin here again? he waits outside? 220
 Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
 More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
 Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
 While hand and eye and something of a heart
 Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth? 225

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
 The gray remainder of the evening out,
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
 How I could paint, were I but back in France,
 One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face. 230
 Not yours this time! I want you at my side
 To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
 Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
 Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
 I take the subjects for his corridor, 235
 Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
 And throw him in another thing or two
 If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
 To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
 What's better and what's all I care about, 240
 Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
 The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
 I regret little, I would change still less. 245
 Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
 The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
 And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
 My father and my mother died of want. 250
 Well, had I riches of my own? you see
 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
 They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
 And I have laboured somewhat in my time
 And not been paid profusely. Some good son 255
 Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
 No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
 You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
 This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance— 260
 Four great walls in the new Jerusalem,
 Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
 For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
 To cover—the three first without a wife,
 While I have mine ! So—still they overcome 265
 Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle ! Go, my Love.

(1855).

THE LOST LEADER.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us devote ;
 They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, 5
 So much was theirs who so little allowed :
 How all our copper had gone for his service !
 Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud !
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
 Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
 Made him our pattern to live and to die !
 Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
 Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves !
 He alone breaks from the van and the freemen, 15
 —He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !
 We shall march prospering,—not through his presence ;
 Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre ;
 Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence, *-Silence*
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire ; 20
 Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
 One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
 One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God !

Life's night begins : let him never come back to us ! 25
 There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
 Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
 Never glad confident morning again !
 Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
 Menace our heart ere we master his own ; 30
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
 Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne !
 (1845).

ASOLANDO.

EPILOGUE. *many parentheses*

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
 When you set your fancies free,
 Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
 —Pity me? 5

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken !
 What had I on earth to do
 With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly ?
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivell
 —Being—who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would
 triumph,
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake. 15

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
 Greet the unseen with a cheer !
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
 "Strive and thrive !" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
 There as here !" 20

(The quotations from Mr. Browning's works are included
 by permission of the owner of the copyrights). (1890).

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

1809-1892.

TO THE QUEEN.

Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

5

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

10

Then —while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes —

15

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

20

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
“She wrought her people lasting good ;

- " Her court was pure ; her life serene ; 25
 God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
 A thousand claims to reverence closed
 In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;
- " And statesmen at her council met 30
 Who knew the seasons when to take
 Occasion by the hand, and make
 The bounds of freedom wider yet
- " By shaping some august decree,
 Which kept her throne unshaken still,
 Broad-based upon her people's will, 35
 And compass'd by the inviolate sea." (1851).
-

THE POET.

- The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.
- He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill, 5
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,
- Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame : 10
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
 And wing'd with flame,
- Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung, 15
 Filling with light

- And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit 20
- Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,
- And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling 25
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.
- So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire. 30
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.
- Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreathes of floating dark upcurl'd, 35
Rare sunrise flow'd.
- And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow. 40
- There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes
- And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame 45
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder 50
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
 No sword of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word 55
 She shook the world.

(1830).

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
 "*The Legend of Good Women*," long ago
 Sung by the morning star of song, who made
 His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath 5
 Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
 Held me above the subject, as strong gales 10
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
 I saw, wherever light illumineth,
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand 15
 The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
 Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
 And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
 And trumpets blown for wars ; 20

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs :
And I saw crowds in colum'd sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall 25
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall .
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ; 30
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates, 35
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray. 40

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down 45
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;
And then I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by downlapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep 50
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,
The maiden splendours of the morning star 55
Shook in the steadfast blue,

Enormous elmtree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath. 60

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air, 65
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree, 70
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew, 75
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame. 80

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime
"Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call, 85
Stillter than chisell'd marble, standing there ;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face 90
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came 95
I brought calamity."

'No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd
To one that stood beside. 100

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse
To her full height her stately stature draws ;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :
This woman was the cause.

“I was cut off from hope in that sad place, 105
 Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years :
 My father held his hand upon his face ;
 I, blinded with my tears,

“Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs
 As in a dream. Dimly I could descry 110
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
 Waiting to see me die.

“The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;
 The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ; 115
 Touch'd ; and I knew no more.”

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
 “I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam.
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
 Then when I left my home.” 120

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried, “Come here,
 That I may look on thee.”

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise, 125
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :
 “I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd 130
 All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
 Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood :
That makes my only woe.

135

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

140

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus. O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

145

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die !

150

"And there he died : and when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left ? look here !"

155

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

160

"I died a queen. The Roman soldier found
 Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
 A name for ever !—lying robed and crown'd,
 Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range 165
 Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
 From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
 Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
 Because with sudden motion from the ground 170
 She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
 The interval of sound.

Still with their fires love tipt his keenest darts ;
 As once they drew into two burning rings
 All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts 175
 Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
 A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,
 And singing clearer than the crested bird,
 That claps his wings at dawn. 180

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
 From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
 Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
 Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel 185
 Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine :
 All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
 With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door 190
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died 195
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure ; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song. 200

My words leapt forth : “ Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath.” She render'd answer high :
“ Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

“ Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root 205
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

“ My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave, 210
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers ’—emptied of all joy, 215
Leaving the dance and song.

“Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
 Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
 The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
 Beneath the battled tower. 220

“The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
 We heard the lion roaring from his den;
 We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
 Or, from the darken’d glen,

“Saw God divide the night with flying flame, 225
 And thunder on the everlasting hills.
 I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
 A solemn scorn of ills.

“When the next moon was roll’d into the sky,
 Strength came to me that equall’d my desire. 230
 How beautiful a thing it was to die
 For God and for my sire!

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
 That I subdued me to my father’s will;
 Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell, 235
 Sweetens the spirit still.

“Moreover it is written that my race
 Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
 On Arnon unto Mineth.” Here her face
 Glow’d, as I look’d at her. 240

She lock’d her lips : she left me where I stood :
 “Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,
 Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
 Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively, 245
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

"Alas ! alas !" a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me : "Turn and look on me : 250
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !
O me that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor 255
Do hunt me day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :
To whom the Egyptian : "O, you tamely died !
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist and thrust
The dagger thro' her side." 260

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark, 265
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France ;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king, 270
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
 That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep 275
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
 Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
 But no two dreams are like. 280

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
 Desiring what is mingled with past years,
 In yearnings that can never be exprest
 By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art, 285
 Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
 Faints, faded by its heat.

(1832).

YOU ASK ME WHY.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
 Within this region I subsist,
 Whose spirits falter in the mist,
 And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till, 5
 ✕ That sober-suited Freedom chose,
 The land, where girt with friends or foes
 A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
 A land of just and old renown, 10
 { Where Freedom broadens slowly down
 From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought 15
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ; 20

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth, 25
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet : 30
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice 35
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fulness of her face — 40

Grave mother of majestic works,
 From her isle-altar gazing down,
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
 And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth. 45
 The wisdom of a thousand years
 Is in them. May perpetual youth
 Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
 Make bright our days and light our dreams, 50
 Turning to scorn with lips divine
 The falsehood of extremes !

April 28, 1921
 Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
 From out the storied Past, and used
 Within the Present, but transfused 55
 Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,
 For English natures, freemen, friends,
 Thy brothers and immortal souls. 60

But pamper not a hasty time,
 Nor feed with crude imaginings
 The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
 That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might 65
 To weakness, neither hide the ray
 From those, not blind, who wait for day,
 Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

MEM.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly 70
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
 Not master'd by some modern term ;
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall 85
 With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
 Set in all lights by many minds,
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that, which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy. 100

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife 105
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ; 110
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;
And round them sea and air are dark 115
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ; 120

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star 125

Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes, 130
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt, 135
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away— 140

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day, 145
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

(1833).

HANDS ALL ROUND.

First pledge our Queen this solemn night,

Then drink to England, every guest ;

That man's the best Cosmopolite

Who loves his native country best.

May freedom's oak for ever live

5

With stronger life from day to day ;

That man's the true Conservative

Who lops the moulder'd branch away.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !

10

To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,

And the great name of England, round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long

To keep our English Empire whole !

To all our noble sons, the strong

15

New England of the Southern Pole !

To England under Indian skies,

To those dark millions of her realm !

To Canada whom we love and prize,

Whatever statesman hold the helm.

20

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !

To this great name of England drink, my friends,

And all her glorious empire, round and round.

To all our statesmen so they be

25

True leaders of the land's desire !

To both our Houses, may they see

Beyond the borough and the shire !

We sail'd wherever ship could sail,

We founded many a mighty state ;

30

Pray God our greatness may not fail

Thro' craven fears of being great.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !

To this great cause of Freedom drink my friends,

35

And the great name of England, round and round.

(1851).

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep, 5
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls 20
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho', Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :

And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known : 35
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere :
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
 "It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept, 45
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt : 55
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
 This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60
 In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
 So strode he back slow to the wounded king. 65

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 "Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
 What is it thou hast seen ? or what has heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.” 70

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :

“ Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight : 75

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt, 85
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth, 90
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done ?

What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand 95
An act unprofitable, against himself ?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept, 100

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, ‘ King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps 105
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were lost."
 So spake he, clouded with his own conceit, 110
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
 "What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 115
 "I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
 To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
 "Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me! 120
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all, 125
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence: 130
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
 Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword, 135
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 140
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him 145
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 "Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?" 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 "Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men, 155
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him 160
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
 "My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear 165
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found not words,
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs. 175

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die." 180

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad. 185
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels 190
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware 195
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony, 200
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three
Queens 205

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept
But she, that rose the tallest of them all

And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, 210
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow
 Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white
 And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops 215
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips. 220
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings. 225

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
 " Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance, 230
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world ; 235
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :
 " The old order changeth, yielding place to new, 240
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou, 245
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats 250
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. 255
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail 265
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull 270
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

(1837).

SIR GALAHAD.

Letraset

My good blade carves the casques of men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.

The shattering trumpet shrilleth high, 5

The hard brands shiver on the steel,
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
 The horse and rider reel :

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
 And when the tide of combat stands, 10

Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favours fall !

For them I battle till the end, 15

To save from shame and thrall :
 But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :

I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20

More bounteous aspects on me beam,

Me mightier transports move and thrill ;

So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer - *Middle Rhyme.*

A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes, 25

A light before me swims,

Between dark stems the forest glows,

I hear a noise of hymns :

Then by some secret shrine I ride ;

I hear a voice, but none are there ; 30

The stalls are void, the doors are wide,

The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chants resound between. 35

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark ;
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
 I float till all is dark. 40

A gentle sound, an awful light !
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God ! 45
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, spins from brand and mail ;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads, 55
 And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear ;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease, 65
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,

Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my dreams ;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear, 70
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls.
 A rolling organ-harmony 75
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.

Then move the trees, the corses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
 "O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near." 80

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.

(1842).

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. 5
 I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name
 For always roaming with a hungry heart ;
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ; 15
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met ;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me 25
 Little remains : but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
 There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ; 50
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep 55
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho' 65
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70
 (1842).

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy, 5
 That he shouts with his sister at play !
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill ; 10
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still !
 Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead 15
 Will never come back to me.

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS."

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea !
 Over the rolling waters go, 5
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me ;
 While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.
 Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon ; 10
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon : 15
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.
 * * * * *
 The splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story :
 The long light shakes across the lakes
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory. 20
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going !
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar 25
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river ; 30
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and forever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

* * * * *

Home they brought her warrior dead : 35
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 "She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low.
 Call'd him worthy to be loved, 40
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face ; 45
 Yet she never moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like summer tempest came her tears—
 "Sweet my child, I live for thee." 50

* * * * *

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more. 55

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 60

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more. 65

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
 On lips that are for others ; deep as love.
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more. 70
 (1847).

IN MEMORIAM.

PRELUDE.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
 Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
 Believing where we cannot prove ;
 Thine are these orbs of light and shade ; 5
 Thou madest Life in man and brute ;
 Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

- Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
 Thou madest man, he knows not why, 10
 He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art just.
- Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou :
 Our wills are ours, we know not how ; 15
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.
- Our little systems have their day ;
 They have their day and cease to be :
 They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20
- We have but faith : we cannot know ;
 For knowledge is of things we see ;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.
- Let knowledge grow from more to more, 25
 But more of reverence in us dwell ;
 That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
- But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
 We mock thee when we do not fear : 30
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.
- Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
 What seem'd my worth since I began ;
 For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

(1849).

THE EAGLE.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

5

NOTES.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

The circumstances under which this poem was written and published have been already related in the Introduction (see pp. ix-xiv). Some further particulars of the suggestions made by Wordsworth may here be given, from his own account, previously quoted only in part: "For example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime, and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages* a day or two before that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time; at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular,—

And listened like a three years' child :
The Mariner had his will."

Coleridge seems later to have had doubts whether Wordsworth's suggestion of moral responsibility was consistent with the imaginative character of the poem as a whole. He is reported as saying in his *Table Talk* on May 31, 1830:—"Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired *The Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the

want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son."

The marginal gloss was added by Coleridge in the edition of 1817, together with a Latin motto from Burnet, of which the following is a translation:—"I readily believe that there are more invisible beings in the universe than visible. But who shall explain to us the nature, the rank and kinship, the distinguishing marks and graces of each? What do they do? Where do they dwell? The human mind has circled round this knowledge, but never attained to it. Yet there is profit, I do not doubt, in sometimes contemplating in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better world: lest the intellect, habituated to the petty details of daily life, should be contracted within too narrow limits and settle down wholly on trifles. But, meanwhile, a watchful eye must be kept on truth, and proportion observed, that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night."

It has been thought that Coleridge took some hints from the *Strange and Dangerous Voyage* of Captain Thomas James (London, 1633), and from an earlier story of Saint Paulinus, but his borrowings from these sources were certainly slight. The invention of the subject, as well as its imaginative treatment, is substantially his own.

Page 1., Lines 10-11. loon, an idle, stupid, worthless fellow.

eftsoons, forthwith, immediately. These obsolete words are used to recall the style of the old ballads, which Coleridge was trying to revive, and to suggest that the time of the story was somewhat remote. What other words in Part I produce the same impression?

Notice what a vivid picture of the Mariner is brought before the mind by the mention of successive details of his personal appearance.

2. 23-4. As the ship sailed further away from the harbour, first the church, then the hill, and last the top of the lighthouse upon the hill disappeared from view.

25. If the sun rose on the left, in what direction was the ship sailing?

29-30. At the equator the noon sun is never far out of the perpendicular, and during the equinoxes it is directly overhead. See lines 111-114.

32. **bassoon**. This particular detail was probably suggested to Coleridge by the fact that during his residence at Stowey, his friend, Poole, added a bassoon to the instruments used in the village church.

36. **minstrelsy**, band of minstrels.

41. **drawn** (in the marginal note) seems to be a printer's mistake for "driven," but it is the reading given in all the editions during Coleridge's lifetime.

3. 46-48. Write out this metaphor in your own words so as to make sure that you understand it.

55-57. **clifts**, cliffs; **sheen**, brightness, splendour; **ken**, see, discern. Compare notes above on lines 10-11.

50. **between** the ship and the land.

62. **in a swound**, heard in a swoon.

4. 75. **stroud**, a rope running from the mast-head to the ship's side.

76. **vesper**, (Latin) evening; in its plural form the term is usually applied to the evening service of the Roman Catholic church.

81. **crossbow**. This suggests that the time of the story was at the end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century, when the crossbow was still in common use.

83. Why "upon the right?" The reader should trace the voyage of the ship on a map; it must have been now about nine days' sail from a point between Cape Horn and the South Pole.

98. **uprist**, used instead of "uprose" (as "eat" instead of "eaten" in line 67) to give the suggestion of language of the olden time.

5. 104. In the edition of 1817 Coleridge altered this line to read

The furrow streamed off free,

and added in a footnote: "In the former edition the line was—

The furrow followed free;

but I had not been long on board a ship before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore, or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern." But in 1828 and after, the original reading was restored.

107. Notice the sudden check in the verse at the end of this line, and the contrast with the swift movement of the preceding stanza.

128. *death-fires*, phosphorescent lights, to which the sailors attached a superstitious significance.

6. 139. *well-a-day*, an antique exclamation of lament, as "gramercy" in line 164 is of joy and thankfulness.

152. *wist*, knew. See notes above on use of old words.

7. 164. "I took the thought of '*grinning for joy*' from poor Burnett's remark to me, when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon, and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak for the constriction, till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me, 'You grinned like an idiot!' He had done the same."—*Table Talk*.

184. *gossamer*es, fine spider-threads.

185-9. Coleridge made considerable alterations, omissions and additions in this part of the poem after it was first published. Another version of this stanza reads:

Are those *her* ribs which flecked the sun
Like bars of a dungeon grate?
Are these two all, all of the crew,
That woman and her mate?

And he left the following additional stanza in manuscript:

This ship it was a plankless thing
A bare Anatomy!
A plankless Spectre—and it moved
Like a being of the Sea!
The woman and a fleshless man
Therein sate merrily.

8. 197. What is it that the Woman Life-in-Death has won, and what difference does this make to the story?

199-200. A fine description of the sudden darkness of the tropics.

209-11. A star within the lower tip of the crescent moon is never seen. This is Coleridge's imaginative way of using what he describes in a manuscript note as the "common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the moon."

9. 223. Notice at the end of each part the repeated reference to the crime the Ancient Mariner has committed.

226-7. "For the last two lines of this stanza I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned and in part composed."—Coleridge's note in the edition of 1817.

10. 254. **reek**, give off vapour.

267-8. The white moonlight, as if in mockery, covered the hot sea with a sheen like that of April hoar frost.

11. 294. Note this and other indications that the religious setting of the poem is Roman Catholic—another way of suggesting the atmosphere of antiquity.

297. The buckets looked silly because they had stayed so long dry and useless.

12. 302. **dank**, wet.

314. **sheen**, bright. The reference seems to be to the Polar Lights, known in the Northern Hemisphere as the Aurora Borealis.

319. **sedge**, coarse grass growing in a swamp.

13. 333. **had been** (subjunctive mood), would have been.

15. 394. **I have not** the power ; I cannot.

16. 435. **charnel-dungeon**, a vault for the bones of the dead.

18. 489. **rood**, cross.

19. 512. **shrieve** (usually pronounced and written “shrive”) to absolve after confession.

524. **throw**, trust, believe, think.

20. 535. **ivy-tod**, ivy-bush.

21. 575. **crossed his brow**, made the sign of the cross on his forehead to warn off evil spirits.

23. 623. **of sense forlorn**, one who has lost his senses.

KUBLA KHAN.

In a note to this poem on its publication in 1816, Coleridge relates the circumstances of its composition. Being in ill-health, he had retired to a lonely farmhouse on Exmoor, and an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence from the old book of travels known as *Purchas his Pilgrimage* :—“ In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plain ground with a wall, wherein are fertile meadows, pleasant springs, delightful streams, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.” Coleridge adds :—“ The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence

that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter!"

Kubla Khan in the thirteenth century founded the Mongol dynasty in China, and made Peking the capital of his empire, which was the largest that has ever existed in Asia. He was an enlightened but ambitious ruler, very fond of pomp and splendour.

23. 13. **athwart a cedarn cover**, across a cedar wood.

24. 41. **Abora**, apparently a mountain of Coleridge's imagination.

CHRISTABEL.

This passage was described by Coleridge himself as "the best and sweetest lines I ever wrote." *Christabel* was begun in 1797-8, and continued in 1800. Scott heard it recited while it was still in manuscript, and the melody of the verse made such an impression on his mind that he adopted it for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. *Christabel* in its fragmentary state was printed in 1816; Coleridge said in 1821, "Of my poetic works I would fain finish *Christabel*," but he never succeeded in doing so. It remains, however, one of the most wonderful and beautiful poems of the Romantic Revival.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

Mrs. Coleridge was wont to complain to her friends that her husband "*would* walk up and down composing poetry instead of coming to bed at proper hours." This poem was the outcome of a midnight meditation in his cottage at Stowey in February, 1798, and was published in the same year.

26. 27. **stranger**, a film of soot sticking to the bars of the grate, which, according to a common English superstition, betokens the coming of a visitor.

29-39. Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, where his father was vicar of the parish and master of the grammar school. Soon after his father's death, in 1781, Coleridge was admitted to Christ's Hospital, the great London charity school, where he used to lie on the roof and gaze upon the clouds and stars. (See lines 52-54.) As to the severity of his master, Boyer, see Lamb's *Essays on Christ's Hospital* in *Nineteenth Century Prose*, and notes thereon (pp. 257-8).

43-44. Coleridge was very fond of his sister Ann, who was five years older than himself and had been his playmate when he was still in petticoats. She died in 1791, to his great grief.

27. 55-65. There was no likelihood at this time that Coleridge would live in the Lake District, but he fulfilled his own prophecy in 1800 by removing to Greta Hall, Keswick, from which he writes soon after his settlement there of his little son's enjoyment of Nature: "I look at my doted-on Hartley—he moves, he lives, he finds impulses from within and from without, he is the darling of the sun and of the breeze. Nature seems to bless him as a thing of her own. He looks at the clouds, the mountains, the living beings of the earth, and vaults and jubilates!"

28. 11. **grannam**, grandmother.

EPITAPH.

This was written a few months before Coleridge's death, and inscribed upon his tombstone in Highgate Churchyard.

6. **death in life**. See line 193 of *The Ancient Mariner*, upon which Professor Dowden remarks: "The Nightmare Life-in-Death, she it was who, with her numbing spell, haunted Coleridge himself in after days." He suffered a great deal from ill-health and depression, in part the cause, in part the effect, of his habit of taking laudanum. For the last sixteen years of his life he was under the care of friends

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE PRELUDE.

This poem is so called because it was intended to be introductory to a great philosophical poem Wordsworth planned on retiring to the Lake District in 1799, "with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live." As a preliminary it seemed to him a reasonable thing "that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and education had qualified him for such an employment." The philosophical poem was to be divided into three parts, and only one of these, *The Excursion*, was ever finished. But the introductory work, in which Wordsworth "undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them," was completed in 1805, although it was not published till 1850, after the poet's death, when it was given the title, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Autobiographical Poem*. Our extract is taken from Book I, which was begun at Goslar, in Germany, and finished in the first year or two of Wordsworth's settlement at Grasmere. Lines 101-163 were published in 1809 in Coleridge's periodical *The Friend*. The whole poem was addressed to Coleridge as "a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the author's intellect is deeply indebted."

29. 2-4. Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, and in his ninth year was sent to Hawkshead Grammar School in the Vale of Esthwaite.

10. **springes**, snares. *Hamlet* I. iii. 115: "Ay, springes to catch woodcocks."

26. **the cultured Vale**, identified by Professor Knight with the neighbouring valley of Yewdale.

30. 1. **object**, what we aimed at. **end**, what actually resulted.

40. **Dust as we are**, in spite of our mortal bodies.

57. **her**, Nature.

31. 73. **elfin pinnacle**, fairy bark. The "craggy ridge" was probably Ironkeld, the "huge peak" behind it Wetherlam; but there are other ridges and peaks about Esthwaite answering to Wordsworth's description. A similar impression may be obtained by rowing out into any lake surrounded by ridges with higher mountains behind them. It is the moral and spiritual interpretation of the impression that is Wordsworth's own.

80. **struck** with the oars.

32-3, 101-163. When Wordsworth published these lines in 1809 he gave them the title *Growth of Genius from the Influence of Natural Objects on the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth*.

101-114. The nominative of this whole sentence is "thou," referring to the "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe," addressed in the opening lines; the verb is "didst intertwine;" and lines 108-114 are an extension of this predicate. By intertwining the passions with Nature, the Divine Spirit purifies and ennobles them; the very emotions of pain and fear, awakened by contact with Nature, gain a touch of Nature's grandeur.

33. 133-7. What is meant exactly by "shod with steel" and "games confederate"?

143. **an alien sound**. The weird echo from the distant hills seemed to come from another world.

150. **reflex**, the reflection of a star in the ice.

155. **spinning still**. To the swift skater, aided by the wind, the banks seem to be moving in the contrary direction, and their motion seems to continue for a moment or two even after he has stopped, the mental impression being retained.

LINES COMPOSED ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY.

Wordsworth wrote of this poem, originally published in *Lyrical Ballads*:—"No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."

The importance of this poem as an illustration of Wordsworth's view of Nature has been already touched on in the Introduction; but it cannot be urged too strongly. Myers says:—"To compare small things with great—or, rather, to compare great things with things vastly greater—the essential spirit of the *Lines near Tintern Abbey* was for practical purposes as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Not the isolated expression of moral ideas, but their fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, is that which connects them for ever with a single name. Therefore it is that

Wordsworth is venerated; because to so many men—indifferent, it may be, to literary or poetical effects, as such—he has shown by the subtle intensity of his own emotion how the contemplation of Nature can be made a revealing agency, like Love or Prayer—an opening, if indeed there be any opening, into the transcendent world.”

34. 1-2. Wordsworth's earlier visit was made, alone and on foot, in 1793.

3-5. The Wye Valley, above Tintern Abbey, is, perhaps, the most beautiful river scenery in England. Although only a few miles from the sea, the stream is free from the influence of the tide; and rocks, meadows, and wooded cliffs combine to make the scene one of romantic loveliness.

23-50. The memory has been a consolation to the poet amid the noise and loneliness of city life (23-31); it has given him, too, feelings of pleasure, which he no longer remembers, but which, he is sure, have had their influence on his moral character (31-36); and, finally, when perplexed by the mysteries of human life, he has been uplifted by the recollection of Nature's loveliness to a mood, in which the soul, endowed with spiritual insight, penetrates beyond material things to the secret of life, and sees with joy the divine harmony underlying the apparent contradictions of the world (36-50). Wordsworth gives frequent expression to this article of his faith in *The Prelude*, from which the following lines may be quoted (Book II):—

If, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

See also p. 32 of this issue, lines 101-114.

35. 56. Have oppressed my spirits.

36. Wordsworth in this passage distinguishes three periods in his relation to Nature. In the first, Nature merely offered opportunity for boyish pleasures, such as bird-nesting, rowing, and skating, described in the extract from *The Prelude*; in the second he took delight in the forms and colours of the woods and mountains and the sound of the waterfalls—a delight of eye and ear only, for he was as yet insensible

to the moods
 Of time and season, to the moral power,
 The affections and the spirit of the place.

In the third period, Nature had a moral and spiritual significance and helped him to understand the mystery of human life. The best commentary is a passage in *The Prelude* (Book VIII), in which he sets forth the same succession of his delight in Nature—first, animal; second, sensuous; third, moral and contemplative:—

Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with me
 Thus early took a place pre-eminent;
 Nature herself was, at this unripe time,
 But secondary to my own pursuits
 And animal activities, and all
 Their trivial pleasures; and when these had drooped
 And gradually expired, and Nature, prized
 For her own sake, became my joy, even then—
 And upwards through late youth, until not less
 Than two-and-twenty summers had been told—
 Was Man in my affections and regards
 Subordinate to her, her visible forms
 And viewless agencies: a passion, she
 A rapture often, and immediate love
 Ever at hand: he, only a delight
 Occasional, an accidental grace,
 His hour being not yet come.

90-104. In this, which we have called the moral or contemplative period, Wordsworth sees every object in Nature as pervaded by the Spirit of God. *The Prelude*, Book II:—

Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
 From Nature and her overflowing soul,
 I had received so much, that all my thoughts
 Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
 Contented, when with bliss ineffable
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
 O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
 O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
 Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
 And mighty depth of waters.

37. 108. Wordsworth noted the resemblance of this line to Young's *Night-Thoughts*, in which it is said that "Our senses, as our reason, are divine," "And half-create the wondrous world they see."

110. In nature as revealed and interpreted by the senses.

114-122. Dorothy Wordsworth was a little younger than her brother, and even in her childhood was a refining influence in his life. He writes of her in *The Sparrow's Nest* :—

The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy !
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
And humble cares, and delicate fears ;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
And love, and thought, and joy.

From childhood they were separated until they were both over twenty, when Dorothy became, not only her brother's constant companion and helper, but a hallowing influence in the crisis of his life. Speaking in *The Prelude* of the time in his early manhood when he was depressed and bewildered by intellectual and religious difficulties, he says :—

Then it was—
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good !—
That the beloved sister in whose sight
Those days were passed
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self ; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon :
She whispered still that brightness would return,
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth.

Dorothy Wordsworth did not attain to her brother's contemplative view of Nature, whose beauty she found sufficient in itself, without attaching to it moral or philosophic significance.

Her eye was not the mistress of her heart ;
Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,
Or barren intermeddling subtleties,
Perplex her mind ; but, wise as women are
When genial circumstance hath favoured them,
She welcomed what was given, and craved no more
Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
Could they have known her, would have loved ; methought
Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
And everything she looked on, should have had
An intimation how she bore herself
Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
In such a being ; for, her common thoughts
Are piety, her life is gratitude.

The Prelude, Book XII

Summing up, at the end of the poem, the personal influences that have moulded his character, Wordsworth gives the first place to his sister:—

Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!
Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere
Poured out for all the early tenderness,
Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis most true
That later seasons owed to thee no less;
For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
Of kindred hands that opened out the springs
Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite
Of all that unassisted I had marked
In life or nature of those charms minute
That win their way into the heart by stealth,
Still, to the very out-going of youth,
I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,
And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!
My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
And teach the little birds to build their nests
And warble in its chambers.

We have already quoted Dorothy Wordsworth's opinion of Coleridge (Introduction p. x); here is Coleridge's first impression of Dorothy Wordsworth:—"W. and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed! in mind, I mean, and heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her rather ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty! but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her most innocent soul outbeams so brightly, that who saw would say—

Guilt was a thing impossible with her.

Her information various. Her eye watchful in minutest observation of Nature; and her taste a perfect electrometer. It bends, protrudes, and draws in at subtlest beauties and most recondite faults."

128. inform, mould, inspire.

38. 146-7. These lines were sadly prophetic. "Her passion for nature and her affection for her brother led her into mountain rambles which were beyond her strength, and her last years were spent in a condition of physical and mental decay." (Myers.)

152. Of past existence, of my own past life. Cf. lines 119-123.

THE RAINBOW.

Wordsworth adopted the last three lines of this little poem as the motto of the following Ode, which was begun about a year later. "Piety" is used in its original Latin sense of "reverence, affection." The meaning is that the man should cherish the love of Nature he feels as a child, so that it may be a continuous inspiration, running through all his life. The sense in which "the child is father of the man" is explained more fully in the Ode.

ODE ON IMMORTALITY.

Of this poem the very highest opinions have been expressed by competent judges. Principal Shairp says it "marks the highest limit which the tide of poetic inspiration has reached in England . . . since the days of Milton." It is, therefore, worthy of the most careful study. The best help to understanding it is given in Wordsworth's own note:—"This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere:—

A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

"But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At

that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines :—

Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things
Fallings from us, vanishings, etc.

“To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here ; but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations, and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind ? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the ‘ Immortality of the Soul,’ I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.”

Wordsworth’s view of childish reminiscences of a previous existence was, however, probably not suggested by Plato, but by the English seventeenth century poet Vaughan, who wrote of “ Childhood ” :—

An age of mysteries ! which he
Must live twice that would God’s face see ;
Which angels guard, and with it play,
Angels ! which foul men drive away.

How do I study now, and scan
Thee more than ere I studied man,
And only see through a long night
Thy edges and thy bordering light !
O for thy centre and mid-day !
For sure that is “ the narrow way ! ”

In another poem Vaughan says :—

Sure, it was so. Man in those early days
 Was not all stone, and earth ;
 He shined a little, and by those weak rays,
 Had some glimpse of his birth.
 He saw heaven o'er his head, and knew from whence
 He came—condemned—hither ;
 And, as first love draws strongest, so from hence
 His mind sure progressed thither.

In *The Retreat* the resemblance to Wordsworth's *Ode* is still closer:—

Happy those early days, when I
 Shined in my angel-infancy !
 Before I understood this place
 Appointed for my second race,
 Or taught my soul to fancy aught
 But a white, celestial thought ;
 When yet I had not walked above
 A mile or two, from my first love,
 And looking back—at that short space—
 Could see a glimpse of His bright face ;
 When on some gilded cloud, or flower
 My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
 And in those weaker glories spy
 Some shadows of eternity ;
 Before I taught my tongue to wound
 My conscience with a sinful sound,
 Or had the black art to dispense
 A several sin to every sense,
 But felt through all this fleshly dress
 Bright shoots of everlastingness.

39. 4. Cf. lines 4-5 of the *Sonnet Composed upon Westminster Bridge* (p. 55), and *Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle*:—

the gleam,
 The light that never was, on sea or land,
 The consecration, and the Poet's Dream.

13. bare, of clouds.

21. tabor, a small drum.

22. a thought of grief, the thought expressed in the last two lines of the preceding stanza.

26. wrong, offend by lack of sympathy.

28. the fields of sleep, "from the dark beyond the dawn," or possibly "from the sleeping [*i.e.*, quiet] fields."

40. 40. coronal, garland.

56-7. Cf. lines 4-5 and note above.

41. 72. Nature's Priest, the Minister and Interpreter of the Divinity.

81. **homely**, humble—in contrast with the glories of man's divine origin.

85-9. Probably suggested by the sight of Hartley Coleridge, to whom Wordsworth addressed a poem *To H.C., Six Years Old*, beginning: "O thou! whose fancies from afar are brought."

42. 102-7. Referring to Shakspeare's well-known lines in *As You Like It*, II. vii. 139-166, "All the world's a stage," etc.

112. **the eternal deep**, the deep mysteries of eternity.

126. **earthly freight**, "burden of earthly cares." (Webb.)

132. **fugitive**, evanescent, quickly disappearing.

43. 141-5. Professor Bonamy Price, walking one day with Wordsworth by the side of Rydal Water, asked him the meaning of these lines:—"The venerable old man raised his aged form erect; he was walking in the middle, and passed across me to a five-barred gate in the wall which bounded the road on the side of the lake. He clenched the top bar firmly with his right hand, pushed strongly against it, and then uttered these ever-memorable words, 'There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of me. I was sure of my own mind; everything else fell away and vanished into thought.' Thought he was sure of; matter for him, at the moment, was an unreality."

44. 181. **primal sympathy**, the child's intuitive sympathy with Nature.

183-4. Cf. *Tintern Abbey*, lines 92-5 (p. 36).

185. **through**, beyond.

189. **yet**, still, even now.

196-9. The sunset has no longer "a celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream," but suggests serious reflections to the Man who has pondered on the issues of Life and Death. The poet's final thought is that acquaintance with the world, while robbing Nature of its first glory, increases its significance by awakening sympathy with the joys and sorrows of humanity. Professor Dowden has well observed that the last two lines of the *Ode* are "often quoted as an illustration of Wordsworth's sensibility to external nature; in reality, they testify to his enriching the sentiment of nature with feeling derived from the heart of man and from the experience of human life."

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

Wordsworth says: "Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb; in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook fell down a sloping rock so as to make a waterfall considerable for that county, and across the pool below had fallen a tree, an ash if I rightly remember, from which rose, perpendicularly, boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy, which waved gently in the breeze, that might, poetically speaking, be called the breath of the waterfall."

TO MY SISTER.

Composed in the grounds of Alfoxden House. For Wordsworth's love of his sister Dorothy, and his indebtedness to her, see *Tintern Abbey*, lines 114-162 (pp. 37-8) and notes thereon.

46. 25-8. Cf. *The Tables Turned*:—

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.

This and the three following poems belong to what is known as the "Lucy" group, written in Germany in 1799. In their absolute simplicity and directness they belong to the highest type of art; their unerring beauty of phrase answers to the intensity of the feeling they embody. Nothing is known of the English maiden here enshrined; she may even have existed only in Wordsworth's imagination.

47. 2. *Dove*, a river in the English Midlands.

49. 7. *diurnal course*, daily revolution.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT.

The subject of this poem is Mary Hutchinson, whom Wordsworth had married two years before. After speaking of his sister in the passage from *The Prelude* (Book XIV), already quoted, he says:—

Thereafter came

One whom with thee friendship had early paired ;
She came, no more a phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined
To penetrate the lofty and the low.

THE DAFFODILS.

Wordsworth says: "The daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves."

Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* has the following entry under April 15, 1802: "When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. . . . As we went along there were more, and yet more; and, at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw there was a long belt of them along the shore. . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones, about and above them; some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed, and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake. They looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing."

52. 21-2. These lines, said by Wordsworth to be the best in the poem, were contributed by his wife. For the thought of this stanza cf. *Tintern Abbey*, lines 23-36 (pp. 34-5).

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Suggested to Wordsworth by the following sentence in the MS. of his friend Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains*: "Passed a female who was reaping alone; she sang in Erse, as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more."

PREFATORY SONNET.

54. 3. *pensive citadels*, refuges in which they can think, secure from interruption.

4. Spinning and weaving had not yet ceased to be carried on in the home. So Wordsworth says of "Lucy":

And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

6. **Furness-fells**, the hills of the district of Furness, in or near which Wordsworth spent the greater part of his life.

8-9. Cf. Lovelace, *To Althea in Prison* :

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
These for a hermitage.

11. The sonnet is a poem setting forth a single thought, limited to fourteen lines, of which the first eight are restricted to two rhymes, and the last six to three. It is found in Italian poetry as early as the thirteenth century. Wordsworth was moved to adopt it by admiration of the sonnets of Milton.

COMPOSED ON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS.

9-14. **in Abraham's bosom**, in the presence of God. Cf. Luke xvi, 22. Wordsworth's companion was his sister Dorothy. See *Tintern Abbey* and notes on pp. 212-3.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.

Wordsworth means that he would rather be a heathen with some sense of the Divinity in Nature than a professed Christian whose heart is so given to the pursuit of wealth and worldly ambition that he is out of harmony with the beautiful sights and sounds of land and sea.

55. 13-14. Proteus and Triton were sea-deities in the old Greek mythology.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Wordsworth appears to have been mistaken as to the date he assigned to this sonnet, which was written when he left London for Dover on his way to Calais early in the morning of July 30th, 1802. The following is the entry in his sister's diary under that date: "Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river—a multitude of little boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge; the houses not overhung by their clouds of smoke, and were spread out endlessly; yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a pure light, that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles."

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

56. 1-2. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Venetians, with the help of France, captured Constantinople, and added to their dominions a large part of the Eastern Empire. They protected Western Europe from the incursions of the Turks for centuries.

4. Venice was founded in the fifth century in the marshes of the Adriatic by inhabitants of the mainland who fled before the conquering Huns under Attila.

7-8. The Venetians having protected Pope Alexander III against the German Emperor, whom they defeated in a sea fight in 1177, the Pope gave the Doge a ring and bade him wed with it the Adriatic that posterity might know that the sea was subject to Venice, "as a bride is to her husband." The ceremony was observed annually by a solemn naval procession, after which the Doge threw a ring into the sea.

9-14. Venice was robbed of much of her power in 1508 by the League of Cambrai, but the real cause of her decay was the discovery of the New World, which made the Atlantic the highway of trade instead of the Mediterranean, and shifted the commercial centre from Italy to England and Holland. The Republic, however, remained free and independent, though greatly enfeebled, until 1797, when Austria and France divided its territory between them. Venice remained under Austrian dominion (except for brief intervals) until it became a part of the kingdom of Italy in 1866.

ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland was conquered by the French in 1798, and three of its cantons were annexed to the Republic. The sonnet appears to have been suggested by the Act of Mediation, by which Napoleon arranged for the government of Switzerland in 1803; he became Emperor a few months afterwards, and at the time the sonnet was written had made himself master of Europe, England alone having resisted him successfully. It was the attack upon the liberties of Switzerland which gave the final blow to the French sympathies of both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and united them with their fellow-countrymen in antagonism to Napoleon.

LORD BYRON.

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF HARROW ON THE HILL.

This poem was written the year after Byron left Harrow, while its recollections were therefore still fresh in his mind. In a way not uncommon in his autobiographical verse, the poet exaggerates his sentiment. From his own words elsewhere, and from other evidence, we know that his five years at the famous school had not been particularly happy; and he had not yet quitted it long enough to make such a retrospective view quite natural. There is no reason, however, for calling the poem insincere. School-life never appears so attractive as when one is leaving it, and Byron had had his share of pleasures and triumphs. Unpopular and aloof at first, he had in his last year become something of a leader, and he seems to have been strongly attached to his Head Master, the Rev. Joseph Drury.

Page 57. Line 4. Byron is unjust to himself here. Some of his friendships certainly proved lasting. Sixteen years after leaving school he met one of these early friends, Lord Clare, in Italy, and records that he was "agitated to a painful degree." "My school friendships were with me passions," he says in another place. His most famous schoolfellow was Sir Robert Peel.

11. Debarred by his lameness from some forms of athletics, Byron excelled in others. He was an uncommonly strong swimmer and a good boxer. The year this poem was written he swam the Thames for three miles, through Blackfriars and Westminster bridges. Some years later, being in Greece, he imitated Leander by swimming the Hellespont.

14. Tombstone, in the churchyard, still pointed out to visitors.

18. Zanga Alonzo, characters in a tragedy called *The Revenge* (1721) by Dr. Edward Young, author of *Night Thoughts*. It is a gloomy, highly-wrought play, probably suggested by Shakspeare's *Othello*. The opening lines by Zanga, the captive Moor, are exactly of the character to captivate the youthful Byron:—

Whether first Nature, or long want of peace,
Has wrought my mind to this, I cannot tell;
But horrors now are not displeasing to me:

Thunder.

I like this rocking of the battlements.
Rage on ye winds! burst clouds, and waters roar!
You bear a just resemblance of my fortune,
And suit the gloomy habit of my soul.

21. **Lear.** Shakspeare's King Lear, an ambitious part for a young actor.

24. **Garrick.** David Garrick (1717-1779). The greatest of English actors. Dr. Johnson said that his death "eclipsed the gaiety of nations."

58. 29. **Ida**, the mountain in Crete where Zeus was said to have been reared and educated. Byron here applies the classical name to his own school. Harrow is famous enough to allow of the use of a somewhat pretentious title. It has been in existence since the 16th century, and has sent out many Englishmen afterwards distinguished.

LACHIN Y GAIR.

Another poem of recollection. Owing to the desperate state of his father's fortunes, Byron in his infancy was taken by his mother to the home of her relatives, the Gordons of Gicht in Aberdeenshire. In that neighbourhood the poet lived until his tenth year, when, falling heir to the title and estates of Newstead, he returned to England. The romantic charm of the Highlands appealed to his imagination, and constituted the strongest tie which bound him to Scotland. His mother was of a violent and irregular temper, and he seems to have owed less care and teaching to her than to his Scotch nurse.

5. **Caledonia.** An old name for Scotland, probably a Roman adaptation of a Celtic word.

59. 25. **Ill-starr'd**, unlucky: a survival of the teaching of astrologers that one's destiny is determined by the stars under which one is born.

27. **Culloden** (1745), the last stand of the Jacobite party who had made many former attempts to establish the right of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of the banished King James II. The battle resulted not only in defeat but in dreadful destruction of the clans.

31. **Pibroch**, properly speaking the music of the bag-pipes; here used for the instrument itself.

36. **Albion**, England—an early name, probably from the Celtic *alb*, a height or cliff, and *ban*, white; perhaps also connected with L. *albus*, white.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA.

The verses under this title are addressed to Byron's sister, Mrs. Leigh, to whom he was devotedly attached. They are also an expression of the melancholy and bitterness which he felt in leaving England after

the miserable experiences of his short married life. Society, with a good deal of reason, had blamed Byron severely. He felt that he had been too harshly used and turned with gratitude to the few friends who were willing to make allowances for him; of these, naturally, his sister was the first.

60. 2. See note on ill-starr'd, p. 59, l. 25.

14. Referring to his wife, her relatives and others.

22. **Contemn**, to despise or scorn (L. *con-temno*). Here the meaning is to find worthy of scorn or contempt. Byron means to say that his enemies may try to crush him, but that his spirit will not bow under their scorn.

28. Mrs. Leigh had not herself escaped censure in the outcry against Byron.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

SONG FROM CANTO I.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage is one of the longest and most deservedly well-known of Byron's poems. It was written and published in separate parts, each the outcome of different journeys and experiences. In 1809 Byron set out on his first journey to the East. He sailed to Lisbon, rode across Spain and sailed from Gibraltar, by way of Malta, to Greece, where he travelled much and had many stimulating experiences. He was two years away, and during that time he wrote Cantos I and II of *Childe Harold*. On his return to London he published the poems, and it was then that he said of himself that he woke one morning and found himself famous. The metre and the old-time diction of the poem he borrowed from Spenser. The hero is a faint reflection of the author. He is called *Childe* (O.E., *young knight*) in imitation of the Spenserian model. For consistency the language should have been Spenserian throughout. As a matter of fact, it is only occasionally so, and in the latter parts of the poem the rather fantastic effort is abandoned.

The song, which is introduced between Stanzas XIII and XIV of Canto I, makes a break between the introduction and the purely descriptive parts. Its short lines and lyric feeling vary the long Spenserian measure and express the idea more suitably. The words are those of the hero, Childe Harold.

61. 4. *Sea-Mew*, a gull.

62. 43. Byron attributes to his characters the feeling of his own time when Napoleon's aggressions were feared.

63. 59. *Feeres* or *Feres*. O.E. companions.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO III.

When Byron left England finally in April, 1816, he sailed first to Ostend, and travelled thence to Brussels and Waterloo. In June he had settled for a time at Geneva, and there wrote the third Canto of *Childe Harold*, a great part of which is made up of his reflections on the famous battlefield. Throughout this canto we find a deeper and stronger note than in the earlier verses, due, no doubt, to the poet's greater experience of life and deepening powers of reflection. The opening stanzas refer directly to the former Cantos.

66. 55. The poet, to close his long and melancholy reflections, quotes the words of Hamlet to Horatio (III. ii. 72), and turns to the thread of his story. Yet, in continuing the story of Harold, he does not altogether cease to depict his own sorrowful life.

67. 82. Through this stanza Byron refers vaguely to his courtship and marriage, and his short-lived desire for parliamentary fame. In the following stanza he indicates his break with society at home and his pursuit of consolation in travel.

106. *Mutual*, a misuse of the word. Byron means "a common language."

Tome, Fr., a volume, i.e., the book of Nature is better than literature.

108. *The Lake*, the Lake of Geneva, near which Byron was writing.

68. 109. *The Chaldean*. The plains of Chaldea were the scene of some of the oldest astronomical observations. Records exist which go back to 976 B.C., and much earlier ones are known to have been made.

114. The last four lines of the stanza show a mixture of metaphors.

120. The images taken from falconry occur several times in Byron. In this instance it is very clear and well sustained.

132. The picture of the sailors drinking in their hour of peril is taken from the narrative of Byron's grandfather, the sailor Byron who was wrecked in the Straits of Magellan and had many other adventures.

69. 136. Suddenly and dramatically Byron introduces his striking verses on Waterloo, the famous field which he visited within a year of the battle, and commemorated in unforgettable lines.

An Empire's Dust. Waterloo was the destruction of Napoleon's empire.

144. **King-making.** Waterloo established the kingdom of Louis XVIII.

145. **Place of Skulls,** Cf. St. Matt. xxvii, 33.

147. A natural reflection: Fate, which had raised up Napoleon so extraordinarily, now transferred the victory to his enemies.

149. Cf. p. 68, l. 120. The eagle is an image often used for Napoleon.

153. Napoleon was at the time a prisoner.

154. In this stanza Byron expresses the view of the English Liberals who had sympathized with the French Revolution, and felt outraged to see Napoleon grasping the power of which the Bourbons had been deprived.

70. 171. Harmodius and Aristogiton have always been favourite heroes with the poets of liberty. Soon after Harmodius slew the tyrant Hipparchus, son of Pisistratus (B.C. 514), a popular Greek song celebrated his achievement. Many English translations of the song have been made, one of which begins:—

I'll wreath my sword in myrtle bough,
The sword that laid the tyrant low,
When patriots, burning to be free,
To Athens gave equality.

172. The reference is to a ball given at Brussels by the Duchess of Richmond, June 15th, 1815. Byron, of course, used the poet's license in the freedom with which he describes the course of events. The officers at the ball knew that they were to march in the morning; the general public was taken by surprise. Byron's use of the figure of contrast is extraordinarily good. Cf. Thackeray's description in *Vanity Fair*.

71. 191. **Brunswick's fated chieftan**, Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick, killed at *Quatre Bras*, June 16th. His father had died from the effects of wounds received when he commanded the Prussians at Jena, 1806.

206. **Mutual eyes**, eyes exchanging looks; a correct use of the word. Cf. p. 67, l. 106.

72. 217. The Cameron's gathering, the war cry of the clan; here loosely used for the music of the pipes to which two Scotch regiments marched through the city at four in the morning.

Albyn's Hills, Scotland. Celtic, *Ailpin*.

220. Noon of night, midnight.

225. Evan Dhu who faught at Killiecrankie, and Donald, the hero of Culloden. It was of the latter that Campbell wrote "Lochiel's Warning."

73. 252. Major Frederick Howard, killed at Waterloo, was Byron's second cousin, being the son of the Earl of Carlisle, the poet's guardian. The wrong to which Byron refers above was a scathing attack in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Reflections on mortality, suggested by the battlefield, continue through many more stanzas of the third canto, after which is a further account of the travels and ideas of the hero. The poet ends as he began with an invocation to his daughter. Canto IV opens with the famous lines on Venice:—

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

This poem was written in 1815, published in 1816. It relates an incident of the war of 1715, in which Corinth was taken by the Turks. The extract given here is only one section of a long poem. Of this, as a whole, the reviewer, Jeffrey, says: "Though not written, perhaps, with too visible an effect, and not very well harmonized in all its parts, it cannot but be regarded as a magnificent composition. . . . The interest is made up of alternate representations of soft and solemn scenes and emotions and of the tumult and terrors and intoxication of war." In the extract which follows we have one of the "soft and solemn scenes."

75. 25. Muezzin, the Mohammedan crier, whose duty it is five times a day to proclaim the hours of prayer from an elevated balcony on the outside of the mosque.

41. Passing-bell, the church bell which used to be rung to signify that a soul was *passing* or leaving the body, and that prayer for the dying was asked for.

THE GIAOUR.

(Pronounced to rhyme with *hour*, the *G* being soft.)

Byron himself calls the *Giaour* (a Turkish word for infidel) "a fragment of a Turkish tale." It is one of the group of poems on Eastern subjects which he produced in rapid succession after his first Mediterranean voyage. Taken as a whole the poem is uneven and sometimes weak. In extracts, notably the one given here, it reaches sublime heights. Here, as in the verses on the "Isles of Greece" which follow this, we have in its finest form Byron's feeling for Greece, his splendid realization of the glories of her past which he tried to communicate to her later sons, the feeling which he finally sealed by his death in the war for Greek liberty. The picture of modern Greece, as the poet saw it, under the figure of a beautiful, newly-dead body, is most skilfully done.

76. 14. Cold obstruction. See Shakspeare, *Measure for Measure*, III. i. 118.

77. 42-46. Thermopylæ Salamis (480 B.C.). Scenes in the great struggle between Greece and Persia.

61. A nameless pyramid. Perhaps contrasting the Egyptian memorials with the Greek.

DON JUAN.

Don Juan is the most notable of the later, as *Childe Harold* is of the earlier poems of Byron. It is very long, sixteen cantos being completed and others planned, and extremely varied. Like *Childe Harold* it has for its central thread the adventures of a hero whose more or less remote original is Byron himself. About this central thread are clustered a multitude of episodes, reflections and satires. It has been called a poetic journal. "If things are farcical," said the poet to his friend Trelawney, "they will do for Don Juan; if heroic, you shall have another canto of *Childe Harold*." The farcical tone gives way, however, at some points, as in the song in Canto III, *The Isles of Greece*, where we have a lyric outburst of the purest kind.

It seems out of place to impose geographical and historical notes on such a piece of splendid melody as this. The student should familiarize himself early with the map of Greece and the outstanding points of her great periods of history.

78. 2. **Sappho** of Lesbos (6th Cent. B.C.), the greatest woman poet and one of the most famous lyrists of ancient Greece.

4. **Delos**, an island of the Cyclades, said to have been called out of the sea by Poseidon and left floating until Zeus chained it fast, that it might be the birthplace of Phoebus and Artemis.

Phoebus, Apollo, God of Music and of the Sun.

7. **The Scian and the Teian Muse.** Homer and Anacreon. Scio or Chios was one of the many places claimed as the birthplace of Homer. Teos was the home of Anacreon.

12. **Islands of the Blest**, the Greek paradise, localized in the little-known waters of the Western (Atlantic) Ocean. Later speculation has identified them with the Cape Verde or the Canary Islands.

13. **Marathon.** Scene of the great Greek triumph in the Persian war (490 B.C.).

19. **A king** Xerxes, the Persian, who saw the overthrow of his great force at Salamis.

79. 42. The Spartan force at the Pass of Thermopylae was but three hundred men, all of whom perished at their post.

50. **Samian wine**, from the island of Samos.

52. **Scio**, Chios.

54. **Bacchanal**, drinker, from Bacchus or Dionysus, the Wine-God. The poet is all scorn for the degenerate Greeks who seem to him more ready to pour out wine than their blood; more ready to remember the dance of Pyrrhicos than the military lessons of Pyrrhus, the great king of Epirus.

59. **Cadmus**, the Phoenician, credited in the legends with the founding of Thebes, and the bringing of the alphabet to Greece.

63. **It made Anacreon's Song Divine.** Anacreon was a Bacchic poet; hence the *it* refers to *wine*, above.

64. **Polycrates**, Tyrant of Samos, died 522 B.C. Anacreon sang at his court.

65. **Were still at least our Countrymen**, now they are Turks.

80. 67. **The Tyrant**, etc. Miltiades, the commander, whose genius led the Greek troops to victory at Marathon, had been ruler or tyrant of the Chersonesus in Asia Minor. Byron wishes to point out that the

so-called tyrants of ancient times were the friends of freedom far more truly than the modern usurping rulers.

74. **Suli . . . Parga.** A stronghold and a harbour in Albania. It was from this north-west region that the Dorian tribes, twelve or thirteen centuries before Christ, had gone down to the conquest of the Peloponnesus. Closely allied with the Dorian was another early migration known among the Greeks as "the return of the Heracleidæ" (the children of Hercules). By a rather strained flight Byron makes his modern Greek singer thus connect the modern Albanians with Sparta and Hercules.

80. **A King,** Louis XVIII.

91. **Sunium,** modern Colonnos, the most southerly point of Attica.

SONNET ON CHILLON.

In 1816, the first year of his exile from England, Byron during the summer made a tour of Lake Geneva. He saw the famous Castle of Chillon, and was much impressed with the story of the patriot Bonnivard who in the 16th century had spent six years imprisoned there for fighting for the republic of Geneva against the Duke of Savoy. The result of the poet's visit was the glorious sonnet here given, and a longer poem, *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR.

This wonderfully-significant and prophetic poem was written only three months before the poet's death. Eight months earlier he had come to Greece to throw himself into the cause of the revolution against the Turks. Those months were the most strenuous, devoted and exemplary of his whole life. He had, as one biographer writes, "high thoughts, high resolves;" but he was not given time or strength to realize them. The unhealthy conditions to which he was exposed brought on a fever of which he died—a willing martyr in the cause of Greece.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

TO A SKYLARK.

In English poetry the skylark has been celebrated many times. The habit of the bird in taking a long flight and then dropping suddenly to its nest in the grass has often awakened suggestions, as its beautiful song has lent inspiration. The student would find much pleasure in comparing this exquisite lyric of Shelley's with Wordsworth's lines beginning, "Ethereal minstrel, pilgrim of the sky," and Hogg's "Bird of the wilderness."

For analysis of this poem, see Prefatory Note, pp. v-vii.

83. 20. Compare Tennyson :

And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

22. that silver sphere, the star mentioned above.

84. 36. Like a poet Notice the fitness and variety of this succession of beautiful images, all having the same office—to emphasize the idea of something beautiful but hidden.

85. 66. Hymenæal, the marriage song, from Hymen, the god of marriage.

TO ———

Several of Shelley's poems are so designated, and as he chose to leave thus undeclared the person addressed, it does not seem advisable to investigate the matter.

86. 7. thoughts, in the objective case, governed by *on* in the next line.

THE CLOUD.

This poem has been often noted as one of the best examples of Shelley's characteristic treatment of nature. He is exceedingly fond of ascribing personality to natural objects, and he is able to sustain this idea at length and with great variety, without any reference to human interests at all. To this purely imaginative power he adds an artistic delight in changing effects, which is peculiarly happy in describing the movements of clouds and waters. Mrs. Shelley, writing of the *Ode to the Skylark* and *The Cloud*, says that, "in the opinion of many critics, they bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted ; listening to the carolling of

the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy ; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat." It should be noted that the *facts* regarding the cloud which Shelley describes are scientifically true. It is only the presentation of them which is imaginative.

87. 21-30. Professor Alexander, in his note on these lines, says:—"What natural phenomenon is described in the poetical language of these lines is by no means clear. Since the pilot is the lightning, Shelley may, perhaps, have thought that the motion of the clouds is influenced by electric forces existing in the earth, and may represent these forces here as 'genii.' The pilot moves the cloud over that part of the earth where he dreams the spirit (the electric force) remains. Through the influence of this force the pilot makes the rain fall from the under surface of the cloud, while the upper surface is basking in the blue light of heaven." (Selections from Shelley, Note p. 342.)

88. 59. A beautifully-condensed description of the cloud effect about the sun and moon.

89. 81. *Cenotaph*, an empty tomb ; here, the blue dome of heaven, which is apparently broken up by clouds.

OZYMANDIAS.

The boast of the Egyptian king, whose name forms the title of this sonnet, is exactly the kind of subject to excite Shelley's irony. He hated the pretentiousness as well as the tyranny of rulers, and in this instance he expresses his feeling in the simplest, yet most effective way. Nothing could exceed the impressiveness of the contrast shown here—the challenge of the monarch, and the utter disappearance of all the works of which he boasted.

Shelley's sonnet is not perfect in form.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES.

This poem reflects a mood not uncommon with Shelley—a reaction from the intense and confident enthusiasm which often carried him forward. The winter of 1818-19, when he was living at Naples, was especially marked by ill-health and depression. Extremely sensitive to impressions, Shelley found in the clear air and the natural beauty all about him a suggestive contrast to his own sorrowful thoughts.

90. 22. *The Sage*. Whether or not Shelley refers to some particular sage is not known.

91. 35. Less than four years later he did hear the sea breathe o'er his dying brain. He was drowned, July 8th, 1822.

ARETHUSA.

In Arethusa we have another example of the qualities noted in *The Cloud*, but in this case the poet has been aided by mythology. According to the legend, the river Alpheus, which flows through the Peloponnesus into the Ionian Sea, had a further passage under the sea and came to the surface again in the Island of Ortygia, near Syracuse, where it mingled its waters with the fountain Arethusa. In such a phenomenon the Greeks readily saw a river god, pursuing a water nymph, and to Shelley's imagination such a story at once became vivid.

91. 3. *Acroceraunian Mountains*, the *Ceraunii Montes* in Epirus.

92. 24. *Erymanthus*, a mountain on the borders of Arcadia and Elis.

93. 74. *Enna*, the central city of Sicily. In its neighbourhood was the famous grove of Proserpine.

84. *Asphodel*, a kind of lily. It was the flower always represented as growing in the Elysian fields—the Grecian paradise.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

Of all Shelley's poems this is the one which has perhaps been most unreservedly praised. Mr. Symonds calls it "the most symmetrically perfect as well as the most impassioned of the minor lyrics." Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "There is no song in the whole of our literature more passionate, more penetrative, more full of the force by which the idea and its form are united into one creation."

The theme is treated very differently from that of *The Cloud* and *Arethusa*. The poet is no longer merely depicting sympathetically the beauty and movement of natural things. Here he finds in nature at once an inspiration and a counterpart of his own feeling. The rush of the western wind is like the rush of his own swift spirit; then with a touch of bitterness he contrasts the wind's freedom with his own fettered powers—fettered by time, circumstance, human weakness and sorrow. Passionately he implores inspiration, and finds it, closing with the note of prophecy and hope.

94. 1. **Autumn's being.** "The great 'Ode to the West Wind' . . . was conceived and partly written in a wood that skirted the Arno on a day when the autumnal gale was gathering the vapours and rainclouds." (Dowden.)

3. **Enchanter.** Presumably the image is that of a wizard, who can "raise spirits" and then dismiss them.

4. **Hectic**, Gk. *ἐκτικός*, habitual; applied to the fever which accompanies certain diseases; here, the red of dying leaves.

21. **Mænad**, a Bacchante.

32. **Pumice Isle**, an island of volcanic origin. Pumice was originally *spumax*, i.e., *spuma* or lava. Baïæ was a famous Roman resort on the Campanian coast.

THE QUESTION.

In this poem we have a charming piece of pure description, an appreciative flower-study, showing minute observation and delicate colouring. Its simplicity is in striking contrast to the subtlety of some of the other nature studies.

97. 9. **wind-flowers**, anemones, from Gk. *ἄνεμος*, the wind.

10. **Arcturi**, Arcturus is a fixed star in the constellation Boötes, the Little Bear. The daisies which star the grass through a great part of the year are likened to this constellation which is always above the horizon.

13. **that tall flower.** This flower has not been identified. There are various blossoms which drop dew on the earth.

17. **eglantine**, sweet-brier.

18. **moonlight-coloured may**, white hawthorn.

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD, LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Mrs. Shelley's note says: "The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air, and a fortnight of a bright, warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly."

The characteristic treatment of the subject may be perhaps best appreciated by comparing this poem with those on similar subjects by other poets—Gray's famous *Elegy*, for instance.

98. 13. *aerial*. *Aerial* is a favourite word of Shelley's. Here he uses it to describe the piled-up sunset clouds.

TO NIGHT.

Another of the exquisite lyrics in which Shelley gives personality to natural things and makes them move like dream figures in a shadowy drama. There is no clear image to be constructed from this personification. In line 11 the Day is referred to as *her*, in line 19 the pronoun is *his*. The figure had simply changed in the poet's mind, and we are not justified in making the pronouns consistent, as Mr. Rossetti suggests.

99. 10. Compare this with lines 3 and 4 in the preceding poem.

CHORUSES FROM "HELLAS."

The great idea of the liberation of the Greeks, which inspired some of Byron's best verse and engaged his active aid, is responsible also for this late drama of Shelley's. Prince Mavrocordato of Greece visited Shelley in Pisa, April, 1821, and told him of the determination of the Greeks to throw off the Turkish yoke and of the proclamation of liberty made by Prince Ypsilante. Shelley's imagination was at once fired and he began his lyrical play, of which the choruses given here are the most striking parts. Shelley says of this work that it "is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the author feels for the cause he would celebrate. . . . The Persæ of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished, scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement."

The first long chorus is simply a review of the progress of freedom in the history of Europe. Like the early historians Shelley goes back to the creation for the foundation of his story, and makes the birth

of freedom coincident with the dawn of light. Compare *Adonais*, ll. 166 and 167.

From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos.

101. 4. **Anarchs**, an unusual noun, meaning authors of lawlessness, the powers of darkness. Milton uses it in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, l. 988.

5. **Imaus**, a mountain range of ancient Asia, corresponding roughly to the later Himalayas.

9. **Thermopylæ and Marathon**, the always-recurring examples of the triumph of freedom.

12. **Philippi**, the battle 42 B.C., when the Roman Republicans under Brutus and Cassius made their last stand.

Half-alighted, because the battle was lost.

15. **The Quenchless Ashes of Milan**. "Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard League against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from the ruin." (Shelley's note.)

16. Compare Byron, *The Giaour*, ll. 56-58.

18. Florence, like Milan, is an example of the successful resistance of the Italian city-states to the Empire in the Middle Ages.

Albion, or England, has, throughout its whole history, shown the struggle of a people determined to secure freedom, and winning it bit by bit from unconstitutional rulers.

Switzerland. The Swiss people have always resisted foreign rulers, and finally secured their free republic in 1803.

21. **From the West**, the states of America.

22. **Against the course**, etc., coming from west to east, contrary to the course of the sun.

102. 25. **Atlantis**, the "fabled Atlantic Island" of the ancients, the mysterious land which lay somewhere in the Western Ocean. Here used for America.

27. **France, with all her sanguine streams**. The wars of Napoleon which the young revolutionists regarded as a reaction against the cause of freedom.

30. **Germany to Spain**. After the downfall of Napoleon, there was a tendency all over Europe to strengthen the power of monarchies and prevent revolution. Such absolutism was, however, steadily opposed by the people, and in one state after another popular rights had to be recognized and constitutions granted. Just about the time of Shelley's

writing, such constitutions had been granted to several of the German States, and in 1820 King Ferdinand VII had re-established that of Spain. "The south of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish revolution had been a signal to Italy." (Mrs. Shelley's note.)

The second chorus given here is a more ethereal, more extraordinary production than the first. Of its form, Mr. Symonds says, that it "marks the highest point of Shelley's rhythmical invention." The movement of the verse is aided by an exquisitely-appropriate imagery, the two together bringing about an effect of marvellous lightness and swiftness. Shelley's note states that "The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets . . . with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world."

103. 63. **A Power**, The Saviour, *The Unknown God*; see Acts xvii, 23.

64. **Promethean**. Prometheus, the Titan, who provoked the wrath of Jove, by stealing his fire, is supposed by some authorities to represent the power of regeneration.

73. **The Moon of Mahomet**, the religion of Mohammedanism, of which the crescent is the symbol, a religion which the poet regards as merely transient.

82-86. Compare Milton's *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, stanzas xix-xxv.

The final chorus marks the summit of the poet's hopes, his prophetic vision of a golden age when there shall be no more war, when all the glories of ancient Greece, and greater glories still shall be realized. In his own note Shelley says, "The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. . . . It will remind the reader 'magno nec proximus intervallo' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits, overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible, and, perhaps, approaching state of society in which 'the lion shall lie down with the lamb,' and 'omnia feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse."

104. 93. Shelley was exceedingly fond of using this simile of the snake.

94. **Weeds**, garments.

99. **Peneus**, a river in Thessaly.

101. **Tempes**, the vale of Tempe in Thessaly was famous for its beauty.

102. **Cyclads**, the Cyclades Islands in the Ægean Sea.

103. **Argo**, the ship in which Jason sailed to find the Golden Fleece.

105. **Orpheus**, one of the lesser divinities. His playing on the harp moved stones and trees to follow him.

108. **Calypso**, the nymph who detained Ulysses on her Island of Ogygia, but from whom he at last broke away and returned to Ithaca.

111. **Laian**, Laius, King of Thebes, was doomed by the gods to sorrow. His son **Œdipus** inherited his tragic destiny and, unable to avoid the decrees of fate, brought terrible suffering on himself and those he loved. His story has been made the subject of some of the greatest tragedies of **Æschylus** and **Sophocles**.

113. **The Sphinx**, a monster which sat by the roadside of Thebes asking a riddle of all who passed, and slaying those who were unable to answer. Many victims had fallen, when **Œdipus** guessed the right answer, whereupon the Sphinx destroyed itself.

105. 121-124. On these lines we have Shelley's own note: "Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the gods of Greece, Asia and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antartic Islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually-increasing activity."

We must remember that the chorus is sung by Greeks; therefore the Greek divinities are made the symbols of the universal idea of the regeneration of mankind.

LINES: WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED.

"It is the nature of that poetry which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy," says Mrs. Shelley; and no choice of selections from Shelley would give a true idea of his quality which did not include a poem or poems showing the profound melancholy, the feeling for the inevitable sadness of life which sometimes possessed him. The lines given here are typical of this mood, and all their imagery bears it out most harmoniously. Every figure, and it is full of figures, intensifies the melancholy idea of the transitoriness of all mortal things, even of affection, and the desolation which is the portion of the weaker but more clinging heart.

JOHN KEATS.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid?

—Beaumont: *Letter to Ben Jonson.*

The Mermaid Tavern was the most famous gathering place in London for the poets and wits of the Elizabethan period. For a time Ben Jonson was the centre of a circle there and roused the applause of many admirers.

107. 10. Robin Hood Maid Marian, characters in the most famous of the early English ballads.

22. in the Zodiac, the sign, *Virgo*, here called mermaid.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

This sonnet stands out as by far the most remarkable piece in Keats's first volume, published 1817. Mr. Charles Cowden-Clarke tells us the story of how it came to be written. Keats was then a surgeon's apprentice in London, but kept up a close friendship with his old school-fellow, who often supplied him with books. One night the two friends sat up late, lost in delight over a borrowed book—a copy of Chapman's translation of Homer. The next morning when Mr. Clarke came down to breakfast he found a copy of the sonnet, written since Keats had left him only a few hours before and sent quite a distance across London.

English literature cannot furnish a better example than this of imagery, chosen and rendered with the perfection of judgment and touch.

108. 8. Chapman, the Elizabethan writer, poet and playwright translated Homer between the years 1598 and 1610.

11. Cortez. The discoverer of the Pacific was really not Cortez but Balboa. The mistake of name is a small matter, the imagination which visualized the scene followed a sure instinct. Balboa's party climbed the peak of Darien (Panama), and looked out on the unknown waters in 1513.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

In the spring of 1819, while Keats was staying at Hampstead he heard a nightingale sing in the garden and soon afterwards wrote this, one of the finest of his odes. The song of the bird transports him to a dream-world of beauty and immortal joy, which he celebrates in verse of marvellous ease and variety. To him the bird song, heard unchanged from generation to generation, typifies the immortality of beauty; to us his own song may well have a like significance—it was “not born for death.”

108. 2. **Hemlock** (*Conium maculatum*), a poisonous plant common in Europe and Asia. Used moderately as an opiate, its extract taken in full strength causes death. The death drink given to Socrates is supposed to have been hemlock.

4. **Lethe-wards.** Lethe, a river in Hades, the waters of which were said to cause forgetfulness, oblivion of all past troubles.

7. **Dryad of the Trees.** The Dryads were nymphs who inhabited oaks and other trees.

13. **Flora**, the Roman goddess of spring and flowers; here used as synonymous with the spring or summer season.

14. **Provençal Song**; Provence, the southern district of France, was famous in the Middle Ages for its troubadours, poets of love and chivalry.

16. **Hippocrene**, the fountain on Mount Helicon which came into existence at the touch of the foot of Pegasus, the winged horse which typifies inspiration. Its inspiring waters were the drink of the Muses.

32. **Not charioted by Bacchus, etc.** Not wine but the spirit of poetry will intoxicate the poet, and carry him out of himself in spite of retarding thoughts.

110. 51. **Darkling I listen**; becoming gradually lost in deepening shadows.

53-54. **Have called him soft names**, to persuade him to take the breath into the air, i.e., from the body.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

A marble urn, sculptured with figures—a procession leading an animal to some sacrifice, inspired this ode, as the bird song inspired the last one. Whether or not Keats had in mind an actual vase or a picture of one is of little moment. It is enough that the appeal

was made by the *idea* of the sculpture, something permanently beautiful in contrast to the transience of all human emotions. The series of pictures, and his reflections upon them, leads up finally to the statement of the artist's belief:—"Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

112. 41. **Attic shape**—Work of an artist of Attica.

Brede, embroidery, here put for relief sculpture.

42. **overwrought**, carved on the surface.

44. **tease us out of**, pluck us away from.

45. **cold pastoral**, a pastoral poem wrought in stone.

49-50. Matthew Arnold, commenting on these closing lines says: "No, it is not all; but it is true, and we have need to know it. And with beauty goes not only truth, joy goes with her also; and this too Keats saw and said, as in the famous first line of his *Endymion* it stands written

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

It is no small thing to have so loved the principle of beauty as to perceive the necessary relation of beauty with truth, and of both with joy."

TO AUTUMN.

This lovely ode has something akin to Shelley's nature-poems, in which objects or seasons are personified. The blending of accurate observation and imagination is here most delicate and beautiful. Mr. Sidney Colvin says: "In the first stanza the bounty, in the last the pensiveness, of the time are expressed in words so transparent and direct that we almost forget they are words at all, and nature herself and the seasons seem speaking to us."

113. 17. **poppies**, the white poppy (*papaver somniferum*) yields opium, and hence is often used as a symbol of sleepiness.

20. Many old-world pictures represent the gleaner with a sheaf of grain on her head.

26. In a letter from Winchester, Sept., 1819, Keats writes: "I never liked stubble fields so much as now—ay, better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble field looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it." The composition was the *Ode to Autumn*.

28. **sallows**, willows.

32. **croft**, A.S., a field.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

Keats took the title of this ballad—The beautiful, pitiless lady—from an old French poem by Alain Chartier, but the treatment of the theme is entirely his own. “Keats’s ballad can hardly be said to tell a story,” says Mr. Colvin, “but rather sets before us, with imagery drawn from the mediæval world of enchantment and knight-errantry, a type of the wasting power of love, when either adverse fate or deluded choice makes of love not a blessing but a bane.”

115. 18. zone, a belt, here made of flowers.

26. manna-dew, cf. Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*, 53-4 :

For he on honey-dew had fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

This poem belongs to the period when the powers of Keats had attained as great a degree of maturity as his pathetically short life allowed. It is in form a narrative, slight in theme, and with its characters very lightly drawn, but full of charm and glowing with colour. The Spenserian stanza lends itself readily to the romantic mediæval story, and picture follows picture in a succession as harmonious as it is rich and splendid.

117. *St. Agnes' Eve.* The vigil of St. Agnes was kept on January 20th, and was traditionally celebrated by maidens as a time when by observing certain rites, and going to bed fasting, they might hope for dreams in which their future husbands should appear. In the story of Keats, the lover Porphyro chooses this night as a happy time to actually appear to the maiden Madeline, to woo, and bear her off from among her kinsmen who are hostile to him. St. Agnes (whose name comes from the Latin *agna*, a lamb) was a Roman maiden who suffered martyrdom as a Christian in the 4th century. It was said that after her death her parents had a vision of her, with a white lamb by her side and surrounded by angels. In art she is always represented with a lamb, and usually bearing the palm of martyrdom.

2. *The owl, for all his feathers was a-cold.* Leigh Hunt annotates the line thus:—“Could he have selected an image more warm and comfortable in itself, and, therefore, better contradicted by the season? We feel the plump, feathery bird, in his nook shivering in spite of his natural household warmth, and staring out at the strange weather.”

4. **woolly fold.** Transferred epithet, *woolly* really belongs to *flock*.

5. **beadsman told.** A person continually engaged in praying, who *tells* or counts off his beads as he prays. Bead is from A.S. *biddan*, to pray. "To bid one's beads" is simply another form of "to say one's prayers."

14. **the sculptured dead.** The carved figures on the tombs in the chapel. Very often these are recumbent or kneeling figures, life-size, and represented in the armour or garments which their originals were accustomed to wear. Keats heightens the idea of the chill atmosphere by imagining it to affect even lifeless things. To his vivid imagination, also, the very rails about the tombs suggest the idea of purgatorial confinement.

21. **flattered.** Leigh Hunt has a long note on this single word, in the course of which he says:—"In this word 'flattered' is the whole theory of the secret of tears; which are the tributes, more or less worthy, of self-pity to self-love. . . . The poor old man was moved by the sweet music to think that so sweet a thing was intended for his comfort, as well as for others."

118. 31. **the silver snarling trumpet** :—Cf. Shakspeare. "The vile squeaking of the wry-neck'd fife." The adjectives in both cases are chosen to imply a note of hostility.

37. **argent, silver.** Here used to bring about the effect of something brilliant and splendid.

119. 61-62. The construction is elliptical. The meaning, however, is quite plain. The cavalier is not cooled by high disdain (but discouraged because) she saw not, etc.

70. **all amort, half-dead.** Perhaps a corruption of *à la mort*.

77. **buttressed, supported or protected by the shadow of the door.**

120. 85-90. The resemblance to the story of Romeo and Juliet must suggest itself strongly here.

90. **beldame**, a word which has deteriorated in meaning; originally *belle dame*.

105. **Gossip**, companion or friend—from God and *sib*, (a relative) *i.e.*, one related in the service of God, a sponsor. By degrees the word has come down to its present degenerate meaning.

121. 115. **the holy loom**, the loom of destiny, guided by the three Fates. The "St. Agnes' wool" is the poet's own addition to the story, to bring out perhaps the special idea of the destinies of maidens of whom St. Agnes was patron.

120. One of the absurd beliefs concerning witches was that they could carry water in a sieve. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. iii. 8:

But in a sieve I'll thither sail.

125. **deceive**, beguile or flatter with happy dreams.

126. **mickle**, much, A.S. *micel*.

129. **urchin**, child, originally, a hedgehog, O.E. *urhone*.

134. **enchantments cold**, in comparison with the real happiness he would give her.

122. 138. **made purple riot**, made the blood leap. Purple is often used poetically for red, following the Latin, *purpureus*.

153. **beard**, to challenge or defy. From the act of plucking by the beard in contemptuous defiance.

156. **passing-bell**, see note on l. 41, p. 75.

123. 171. **since Merlin paid his demon all his monstrous debt**. Merlin's debt was his existence which he owed to a demon father. When he died or disappeared through the disclosure of his own wizard secrets to Vivian, he was yielding himself up again to the demon power. The only parallel here is found in the fact that the lovers are meeting in an atmosphere of spells and charms. See Tennyson: *Merlin and Vivien*.

175. **cates**. This word and *cater* both come from the old French *acater* (modern French *acheter*) to procure or provide, applied in the case of *cater* to buying food, and in *cates* to a special kind of food itself, i.e., delicacies.

180. **or may I never leave my grave**, never take part in the resurrection.

185. **espial**, spying out, investigating. From old French *espier*, to spy.

124. 193, **a mission'd spirit, unaware**—a spirit sent on some special message, intent upon it and unobservant of everything else. As she appears and passes to her chamber Porphyro is dragged aside by old Angela, and the reader is made to follow and observe Madeline. It will be noticed at once that Madeline's chamber and everything about her is full of colour and warmth and beauty in contrast to the chill, repellant atmosphere without.

216. **scutcheon** or escutcheon, armorial bearings, from L. *scutum*, a shield. "Could all the pomp and graces of aristocracy, with Titian's

and Raphael's aid to boot, go beyond the rich religion of this picture, with its 'twilight saints' and its scutcheons '*blushing* with the blood of queens?'" (Leigh Hunt's note.)

125. 218. *gules*, heraldic for *red*.

241. *clasp'd like a missal where swart paynims pray*, an extraordinary image to express the power of sleep claspings Madeline body and soul. The idea of intense and jealous possession is conveyed through the picture of the mass book (low *L. missa*, a mass) held tightly by the Christian who is hemmed round by "swart Paynims"—black or savage pagans. This elaborate and rather far-fetched figure is quickly followed by the simple, natural one: "As though a rose should shut and be a bud again."

126. 251. *Carpet*, rather an anachronism in this mediæval story.

257. *Morphean Amulet*, sleep-charm. Morpheus was the god of dreams. An amulet is a kind of medal or trinket to which is attached mystic power.

261. *The hall-door shuts again and all the noise is gone*. Mr. Charles Cowden-Clarke gives us an interesting note on this line. When Keats was at the Clarke School at Enfield he and some of his friends used to get out of bed at night to listen to Charles Cowden-Clarke playing the piano downstairs. In reading this poem to his friend later on, Keats said "that line came into my head when I remembered how I used to listen at night to your music at school."

268. *Argosy*, a great ship, probably from Jason's ship the "Argo."

270. *From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon*—put prosaically, this is merely "from the East," the land of silk and spice and luxuries. Mr. W. M. Rossetti says of this episode of Porphyro's spreading the feast by Madeline's bedside: "Why he did this no critic and no admirer has yet been able to divine." Certainly the incident has no very clear explanation, but since it is made the occasion of some exquisite description no one can wish it away. As the lady has gone fasting to bed, and as the lover is fulfilling the charm for which the feast was observed, he may have considered it his part also to provide this delicate nourishment. It has been pointed out that the richness and rare quality of the dainties heightens the idea of homage.

127. 277. *eremite*, hermit; the devotee who kneels in rapt fervor before a solitary shrine, as Porphyro here before Madeline.

292. In Provence call'd—The ballad, by Alain Chartier, was not in fact a Provençal one. The title haunted Keats till he wrote his own ballad upon it.

129. 336. vermeil-dyed, vermillion—bright red, from *vermis*, the little worm (really an insect) from which the dye is obtained.

343. haggard, wild, from Fr. *hagard*, a wild hawk.

346. wassailers, drinkers, from A.S. *waes hael*:—"A health to you," the shout which accompanied the drink.

130. 360. See note on l. 251, p. 126.

376. deform, poetic licence permits this form for the past participle.

377. Aves, prayers—from the opening of the prayer, *Ave Maria*.

"What can be better touched," says Mr. Colvin, in closing his criticism on the poem, "than the figures of the beadsman and the nurse, who live just long enough to share in the wonders of the night, and die quietly of age when their parts are over?"

A PROPHECY.

This delicately imaginative little poem is addressed to the child of the poet's brother, George Keats, who lived in Louisville, Kentucky. Keats never saw this child, but the idea of the little creature, born in the freedom of the new world, to destinies full of unknown possibilities stirred his imagination. In fancy he saw the baby, destined from birth for a poet's vocation, and he embodies his fancy in the classical symbol of fire which is harmless to the one marked out by the gods. So in Virgil's story, the young Ascanius was marked as the ruler of his race. (*Æneid*, Bk. II, ll. 680-700.)

131. 18-20. Fate has decided the child's calling, even before he is born:

23. .silly, simple, inoffensive, A.S. *sælig*. Cf. Milton,

Perhaps their loves or else their sheep,
Was all that did their *silly* thoughts so busy keep.

—On the Nativity, ll. 91-92.

132. 46. paddle, to play: diminutive of pad, to go.

ROBERT BROWNING.

PIPPA PASSES.

Felippa, or Pippa, the little silk-winder of Asolo, is one of the most charming of Browning's characters. As she passes in and out of the village on her one holiday in the year, singing her artless songs, she unconsciously influences the lives of those about her. Her first song, here given, awakens two wicked people to a sense of their guilt and the divine government of the world; the second rouses a young painter to a higher conception of love and art. The explanation of the song is given in the lines that follow it:—

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, "Kate the Queen—
She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed,
"Need him to help her!"

Browning gives us in the first five lines of each stanza the page's song; in the last four the comments of the Queen and her maid, who overhear him. Caterina (or Kate) Cornaro was a Venetian citizen who married the King of Cyprus, and after his death, resigning her authority to the Republic, retired to keep a small court at the Venetian village of Asolo, where she "wielded her little sceptre for her people's good, and won their love by gentleness and grace." Browning first visited Asolo in 1838, and was enchanted by it. He returned forty years later with equal enthusiasm, and just before his death bought some land there, on which he proposed to build a tower, with a view of Venice, to be called "Pippa's Tower."

133. 26. jesses, straps for hawks' legs.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD.

It is interesting to contrast Browning's preference for English birds and flowers, expressed in this poem after his earlier visits to the Continent, with the love of Italy breathed in the next, after his settlement with his wife in Florence.

DE GUSTIBUS.

The Latin proverb "De gustibus non est disputandum," corresponds to the English one "There's no accounting for tastes." Browning says that if our preferences persist after death, his will be, not for England, but for Italy.

135. 22. *cicala*, the tree-cricket, often heard in Italy in the heat of summer.

36. *liver-wing*, right arm. The Bourbon rule in Southern Italy was exceedingly unpopular, and numerous attempts were made to cast it off; the king here referred to was Ferdinand II, whose cruelties were denounced by Gladstone in 1851. He was succeeded by his son, who was expelled in 1860, and Naples was incorporated with the new kingdom of Italy. Browning sympathized with all the Italians' attempts to regain their liberty and independence, even when they went the length of assassination.

 THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

Browning was proud to remember that the Italian patriot Mazzini used to read this poem to his fellow exiles in England to show how an Englishman could sympathize with them. (Mrs. Orr.)

136. 8. *Charles*. Charles Albert, Prince of Carignano, belonged to the royal house of Savoy, but was brought up among the people, and as a young man expressed sympathy with revolutionary principles. He was afterwards accused of betraying Italy, and was bitterly denounced by his former friends.

19. *Metternich our friend*—said ironically. Metternich, the Austrian statesman and diplomatist, was the most determined enemy of Italian independence.

20. See note above on Charles Albert.

137. 41. *crypt*, place of concealment; commonly used of a place for burial.

46. My fears were not for myself, but for my country; "on me Rested the hopes of Italy."

138. 75. *duomo* (Italian) cathedral.

76. *Tenebræ*, a service of the Roman Catholic Church, which involves the gradual extinction of the lights on the altar. The Latin word literally means "darkness."

81. It was not unusual for a priest to render service to the cause of Italian liberty.

139. 125-7. Charles Albert became King of Sardinia in 1831 and resigned the crown to his son, Victor Emmanuel, in 1849. He retired to Portugal, where he died in the same year, "broken-hearted and misunderstood." The patriot's wish as expressed by Browning was, therefore, fulfilled four years after the poem was published. Charles Albert's position was a very difficult one, and historians generally take a more favourable view of his conduct than is here given. Browning has merely given characteristic expression to the sentiment of the ardent Italian patriots of the time.

140. 138-144. These lines forcefully represent the division of opinion in Italy during the apparently fruitless struggles for independence.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

Ratisbon is in Bavaria, on the right bank of the Danube. It was stormed by Napoleon in 1809, after an obstinate defence by the Austrians. Mrs. Orr says :—"The story is true; but its actual hero was a man."

141. 1. **we French.** The story is told by a spectator.

7. **prone,** bending or leaning forward.

11. **Lannes,** one of Napoleon's generals.

29. **flag-bird.** The Napoleonic standard was a tricolour powdered with golden bees, with an eagle on the central stripe.

vans, wings. Latin *vannus*, a fan for winnowing grain.

142. 34-5. **film** is nominative to **sheathes**.

HERVÉ RIEL.

Browning was in France when it was invaded by Prussia in 1870, and escaped from the country with some difficulty before the outbreak of the disorders which followed the collapse of the French resistance. Desiring to express his sympathy for the sufferers by the siege of Paris, he sold this poem to *Cornhill Magazine* for £100, which he gave as a subscription to the Relief Fund. It was written in 1867 and first published in 1871. The incident it relates was at first denied in France, but the records of the Admiralty of the time proved that

Browning was correct, except in one small detail: the reward Hervé Riel asked and received was "un congé absolu"—a holiday for the rest of his life.

142. 1. the Hogue, Cap La Hogue, where the French fleet was attacked in 1692 by the English and Dutch, and forced to retire. The expedition aimed at the restoration of James II, who watched the defeat from the Norman coast.

5. St. Malo, at the mouth of the Rance river, in Brittany, has a harbor which is described as "safe, but difficult of approach." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was a flourishing port, and from it Jacques Cartier sailed in 1535 to Quebec and Montreal.

143. 18. twelve and eighty. French, quatre-vingt-douze.

30. Plymouth Sound, in the West of England, an important harbour and naval station.

43. pressed, forced to serve.

Tourville, the French admiral.

Croisickese, of Croisic, a little fishing village of Brittany, where Browning liked to stay. See the title of the next poem in this selection. It was no doubt at Croisic that Browning picked up the story.

144. 46. Malouins, men of St. Malo.

49. Grève, the bank of sand where the river discharges into the sea.

53. Solidor, the fort defending the bay.

145. 75. profound (here used as a noun), depths.

92. rampired, protected by ramparts or fortifications.

95. for, instead of.

147. 135. the Louvre, a famous palace at Paris, now used as an art museum. On its external walls there are eighty-six statues of notable Frenchmen, but not, of course, one of the forgotten hero, Hervé Riel.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.

The Prologue and the Epilogue are connected with the main poem (which is here omitted) only by the thought, common to all three, that love is a necessary part of the poet's life and art. The Prologue may cause a little difficulty to begin with by its extraordinary conciseness, but this only adds to its charm when the meaning has been grasped. The grammatical construction and the relation of the stanzas to each other are indicated in the following prose rendering: "As a bank of

moss stands bare till some May morning it is made beautiful by the sudden growth of the violets; as the night sky is dark and lowering till a bright star pierces the concealing clouds; so the world seemed to hem in my life with disgrace till your face appeared to brighten it with the smile of God—the divine gift of love.”

In the Epilogue it is a young girl who repeats to the poet the “pretty tale” he has once told her, and makes her own application of its significance. The story is found in Greek literature both in prose and in verse.

149. 50. Here, as in lines 15 and 21, the poet has attempted to interrupt.

150. 77. *Lotte*, the pet name of Charlotte Buff, upon whom Goethe modelled the heroine of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. The reference here, however, is rather to Goethe’s way of treating women in general than to the particular case of *Lotte*, for she was already engaged to be married when he met her.

100-2. The sweet lilt of the treble was supplied by the chirping of the cricket, when its absence would have allowed the predominance of the sombre bass. Cf. lines 112-4.

120. (There, enough!) To what interruption of the poet’s does this reply?

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

In the Church of St. Augustine at Fano, on the Adriatic, there is a picture called “The Guardian Angel,” by Guercino, an Italian painter of the seventeenth century. It represents an angel with outspread wings embracing a kneeling child, whose hands he folds in prayer.

151. 6. another child, the poet himself.

7. retrieve, bring back to the right way.

152. 14-16. In the picture cherubs point to the opened heaven, and the child looks upward past the angel’s head.

18. bird of God. This beautiful expression is translated from Dante’s *Purgatorio*.

20-21. The angel seems to be enfolding the child with the skirt of his robe, held in his left hand.

39-40. The angel’s head is turned away, but the reason given is Browning’s own.

153. 46. *My angel with me, too, his wife.* See line 54.

54. *dear old friend, Alfred Domett, a much-prized friend of Browning's youth, who in 1842 settled in New Zealand.*

56. *Ancona, on the Italian coast, near Fano.*

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

This is one of the most remarkable of Browning's shorter poems, whether regarded as a study of character or of art. It was written when he was living in Florence, in answer to a request from a friend in England for a copy of the portrait of Andrea del Sarto and his wife in the Pitti Palace. Browning could not get one, and sent the poem instead. Mr. Ernest Radford thus describes the picture:—"The artist and his wife are presented at half length. Andrea turns towards her with a pleading expression on his face. . . . His right arm is round her; he leans forward as if searching her face for the strength that has gone from himself. . . . She holds the letter in her hand, and looks neither at that nor at him, but straight out of the canvas. And the beautiful face with the red-brown hair is passive and unruffled, and awfully expressionless. There is silent thunder in this face if there ever was, but there is no anger. It suggests only a very mild, and at the same time immutable determination to have her own way."

Browning develops, in his favourite form of the dramatic monologue, the suggestion given by Andrea's portrait of himself; for the details he is chiefly indebted to Vasari's *Life of Andrea del Sarto*, as will be seen from the following extracts (translation by Blashfield and Hopkins, with Mrs. Foster's notes):—"Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was for genius and depth of judgment in the art he practised, he would, beyond all doubt, have been without an equal. But there was a certain timidity of mind, a sort of diffidence and want of force in his nature, which rendered it impossible that those evidences of ardour and animation, which are proper to the more exalted character, should ever appear in him; nor did he at any time display one particle of that elevation which, could it but have been added to the advantages wherewith he was endowed, would have rendered him a truly divine painter. . . . At that time there was a most beautiful girl in the Via di San Gallo, who was married to a cap-maker, and who, though born of a poor and vicious father,

carried about her as much pride and haughtiness as beauty and fascination. She delighted in trapping the hearts of men, and among others ensnared the unlucky Andrea, whose immoderate love for her soon caused him to neglect the studies demanded by his art, and in great measure to discontinue the assistance which he had given to his parents. Now it chanced that a sudden and grievous illness seized the husband of this woman, who rose no more from his bed, but died thereof. Without taking counsel of his friends therefore; without regard to the dignity of his art or the consideration due to his genius, and to the eminence he had attained with so much labour; without a word, in short, to any of his kindred, Andrea took this Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede, such was the name of the woman, to be his wife; her beauty appearing to him to merit thus much at his hands, and his love for her having more influence over him than the glory and honour towards which he had begun to make such hopeful advances. But when this news became known in Florence the respect and affection which his friends had previously borne to Andrea changed to contempt and disgust, since it appeared to them that the darkness of this disgrace had obscured for a time all the glory and renown obtained by his talents. But he destroyed his own peace as well as estranged his friends by this act, seeing that he soon became jealous, and found that he had besides fallen into the hands of an artful woman, who made him do as she pleased in all things. He abandoned his own poor father and mother, for example, and adopted the father and sisters of his wife in their stead; insomuch that all who knew the facts mourned over him, and he soon began to be as much avoided as he had previously been sought after." Andrea found this mode of life so oppressive that, on the advice of his friends, he put his wife in safe keeping and went to Paris, where he was richly rewarded by the King of France for his work. But a pitiful letter from his wife induced him to return. "Taking the money which the king confided to him for the purchase of pictures, statues and other fine things, he set off, therefore, having first sworn on the gospels to return in a few months. Arrived happily in Florence, he lived joyously with his wife for some time, making large presents to her father and sisters, but doing nothing for his own parents, whom he would not even see, and who, at the end of a certain period, ended their lives in great poverty and misery." Having spent the money entrusted to him in building a house and indulging himself in various other pleasures, Andrea was afraid to return to France, and remained in Florence in the very lowest position, "procuring a livelihood and passing his time as he best might."

So says Vasari, who at one time was Andrea's pupil, and published his *Lives of the Painters* while Andrea's widow was still in Florence; but recent investigation has failed to reveal the slightest evidence in support of the charge of embezzlement made by Vasari against Andrea, and it has been generally discredited.

153. 15. **Fiesol ,** the village on the top of the ridge overlooking the quarter of Florence in which Andrea lived.

154. 25. **It saves a model.** "Andrea rarely painted the countenance of a woman in any place that he did not avail himself of the features of his wife; and if at any time he took his model from any other face there was always a resemblance to hers in the painting, not only because he had this woman constantly before him and depicted her so frequently, but also, and what is still more, because he had her lineaments engraven on his heart; it thus happens that almost all his female heads have a certain something which recalls that of his wife." (Vasari.)

32. **no one's,** not even his.

36-45. Lucrezia has lost only her first pride in her husband; he has lost all his youthful ambitions and aspirations, as the day loses its noontide splendour, and the glory of summer changes to the decay of autumn.

43. **huddled more inside.** The trees are huddled together within the convent wall, and have no room to grow; but they are, perhaps, safer—so, perhaps, too, is the painter in his own home, though he misses the inspiration and development that come from contact with the world. Andrea acquiesces in his seclusion, but he cannot help regretting his lost opportunities.

156. 93. **Morello,** a mountain near Florence.

105. **the Urbinate,** Raphael of Urbino, the most famous of Italian painters; he died in 1520, ten years before Andrea. Vasari says that Andrea copied a portrait by Raphael with such exactness that Raphael's own pupils, who had helped in the painting, could not tell the copy from the original.

157. 130. **Agnolo,** the great Italian painter usually called Michael Angelo in English; he was doubtless the "Someone" of line 76; Andrea refers to him again in line 184.

150. **Fontainebleau,** a royal palace not far from Paris.

158. 166. See quotation from Vasari above for Andrea's recall from France by his wife's importunities.

173. there, in your heart.

174. ere the triumph, of my genius in art.

189-193. Bocchi, in his *Beauties of Florence*, states that Michael Angelo said to Raphael, referring to Andrea :—"There is a little man in Florence, who, if he were employed upon such great works as have been given to you, would bring the sweat to your brow."

159. 199. Lucrezia has interrupted to ask Andrea about whom and what he is talking. She is evidently paying no attention.

209-10. Mount Morello can no longer be seen, the lights on the city wall are lit, and the little owls, named in Italy from their call, *Chiu*, are crying; darkness is falling on the house, as on Andrea's life.

212-18. See above for the charge against Andrea of building a house for himself with the money entrusted to him by King Francis to buy pictures with.

220. The cousin (or lover?) who waits outside is the third character in the little drama—silent and unseen, but profoundly affecting the situation.

161. 263. Leonard, Leonardo da Vinci, the third great Italian painter of the time; he died the year before Raphael.

266. Andrea at last acknowledges to himself that his wife has been a hindrance instead of a help, a drag preventing his ascent from the second rank to the first: but he prefers this to the sacrifice of giving her up.

THE LOST LEADER.

The suggestion for this early poem was undoubtedly Wordsworth's abandonment of the Liberal principles of his youth for the reactionary Conservatism of his old age; but it was only a suggestion. "Once call my fancy portrait Wordsworth," Browning wrote, "and how much more ought one to say." In another letter he speaks of Wordsworth's "moral and intellectual superiority," and protests against taking this poem as an attempt to draw his real likeness. It is really a character study from Browning's own imagination, and should be so regarded, in justice to both poets.

162. 29-30. It is best for him to fight for the side he has chosen as well as he can, to fight so well indeed as to threaten us with defeat before the hour of our final triumph. "Then let him receive," etc.

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO.

We have given at the foot of each poem the date of its publication, and the volume to which this little poem is the Epilogue bears the date 1890; it was actually issued in London on Dec. 12, 1889, the day of Browning's death at Venice. "The report of his illness had quickened public interest in the forthcoming work, and his son had the satisfaction of telling him of its already realized success, while he could still receive a warm, if momentary pleasure from the intelligence." (Mrs. Orr.) Browning prepared the volume for publication while staying in the Asolo villa of his friend Mrs. Arthur Bronson, to whom it is dedicated. The fanciful title is derived from the Italian verb *asolare*—"to disport in the open air, amuse one's self at random"—popularly ascribed, Browning tells us, to Cardinal Bembo, who was Queen Cornaro's secretary, and in his dialogue, *Gli Asolani*, described the discussions on platonic love and kindred subjects the little court at Asolo used to indulge in. To Mrs. Bronson Browning justified the title in the following sentence: "I use it for love of the place and in requital of your pleasant assurance that an early poem of mine first attracted you thither." This was, no doubt, *Pippa Passes*, for which, and further particulars as to Browning's connection with Asolo, see notes on p. 247.

The Epilogue is a final expression of Browning's profound belief in a future life of hopeful activity. When reading the poem in proof, he said of the third stanza:—"It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it, but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand."

As in life he had faith in right, so in death—which only fools think of as the prison of the soul—he would be, not pitied, but encouraged by the good wishes of those who are working in the world.

162. 17. the unseen, the poet himself after death.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

TO THE QUEEN.

This poem of dedication prefaced the seventh edition of Tennyson's poems, published in 1851, the year after he had received the Laureateship. In this, as in all his poems to the Queen, we find the dignity and sincerity which such poems should possess, but which are often lacking in court poetry. Tennyson was too great a poet to debase his art to flattery, and his unaffected admiration for the Queen made his task simple and spontaneous.

163. 7-8. Tennyson succeeded Wordsworth in the Laureateship, and felt that in following so great a man he was receiving an honour even greater than the office itself could give.

13. a sweeter music, that of the birds in the spring.

THE POET.

This poem, which expresses Tennyson's conception of the poet's nature and vocation, was written when he was a very young man, and published in the volume of 1830. It is a wonderfully clear and high vision, and one to which Tennyson was always true.

164. 1. a golden clime, the poet's world of imagination.

5. He saw thro' life and death. "He speaks of the clear insight into God and man which is the best gift of the poet." (S. Brooke.)

165. 24. a flower all gold, the dandelion, with its winged seeds.

37. Tennyson, like the earlier poets of the century, believed that the influence of the poet must be powerful in the great causes of freedom and of peace.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

This beautiful poem was suggested, as Tennyson tells us, by Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, but it does not in any way follow the early model. Chaucer wrote a set of poems on various heroines of antiquity; Tennyson brings together the heroines of many stories and groups them in one delightful composition. For a setting, he resorts to the old device of a dream.

166. 5. **Dan**, a mediæval corruption of *Dominus*, master, often found in Chaucer.

167. 27. **Tortoise**, a literal translation of the Latin *testudo*, a name applied to a group of soldiers with shields held above their heads for protection as they approached the wall of a hostile city. The covering of overlapping shields was supposed to look like a tortoise shell.

169. 85-96. In these lines we are introduced to the first recognizable figure in the dream, Helen of Troy. Her story is almost too well known to require repetition. As the wife of Menelaus she was called the most beautiful woman in the world, and it was therefore inevitable that she should be given to Paris, to whom Venus had promised the most beautiful of living women for his bride. Her abduction by Paris roused every prince in Greece to take up the cause of Menelaus, and the ten years' war followed, which ended only in the destruction of Troy. As the daughter of Jupiter and Leda, Helen has a right to the title, "daughter of the gods."

100. **To one that stood beside**: Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon. The Grecian ships, when ready to set forth against Troy, were becalmed at Aulis. Calchas, the seer, announced that the gods required a human sacrifice and indicated the beautiful maiden Iphigenia as the proper victim. Legends of the sacrifice vary, but in most of them it is said that the maiden did not die, but was snatched away by Diana, to become her perpetual votaress.

170. 127. **A Queen** Cleopatra, the last of the Egyptian line of the Ptolemies. By her extraordinary attractions she was able to fascinate and subdue Mark Antony, so that he wasted years in Egypt. When the moment of civil war with Octavius Cæsar arrived, Antony was unprepared and went down before his rival, ending his disgrace by suicide. Cleopatra, who had failed in all her attempts to fascinate Octavius, refused to grace his triumph, and brought about her own death by the sting of a poisonous serpent.

171. 144. **The Nilus would have risen**. . . . A good example of the figure of hyperbole.

145. **Lybian**, African.

146. **Canopus**, a star of the first magnitude in the southern constellation of Argo. One of the chief cities in Egypt was named from it.

150, 151. **Hercules** **Bacchus**, names well chosen for Antony who was by turns a soldier and a man of pleasure.

160. **Aspic** or asp, a species of snake found in the Nile region, the bite or sting of which is peculiarly deadly

172. 174. two burning rings, the circles of her eyes.

173. 195. Her who died to save her father's vow : the daughter of Jephthah. See Judges xi, 30-40.

174. 243. Thridding, threading. Boskage, a grove ; (Fr. *bocage*.)

175. 251. Rosamund. The fair Rosamund, one of the favourites of King Henry II, has been often celebrated in romance. It was said that to save her from his jealous queen, Henry kept her in a high tower, surrounded by a secret maze. In time, however, she was discovered and put to death. See Tennyson's *Becket*.

255. anger'd Eleanor. Eleanor of Poitou, Queen of Henry II.

259. Fulvia, wife of Mark Antony ; bearing the same relation to Cleopatra as Queen Eleanor to Rosamund.

263. The captain of my dreams. See line 55.

266. Her who clasp'd . . . her murder'd father's head. Margaret Roper, eldest daughter of the great Sir Thomas More, at the greatest risk secured her father's head after he had been executed, preserved it as a sacred relic, and clasped it in her arms in her dying hour. Tennyson speaks of her father as "murdered," for though he was sentenced and put to death by the law of King Henry VIII, his sentence was unjust, and his death a judicial murder.

267. Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans. The story of how she, by her remarkable enthusiasm, brought new courage to the French army in the most desperate days of the hundred years' war, is well known. Through her the English were defeated, and Charles VII was crowned King of France.

269. Her, who . . . drew forth the poison. Eleanor of Castile, wife of King Edward I. The legend is that when the king, then Prince Edward, was fighting in the Crusade, he was wounded by a poisoned arrow, and his young wife risked her own life to save his by sucking the poison from his wound. Like other picturesque legends, the story has been rather discredited by later historians.

YOU ASK ME WHY.

In the set of poems under this title, Tennyson defines his political position clearly, as that of an Englishman who believes thoroughly in his country, its constitution, and its laws. As an artist he may "languish for the purple seas"; but as a man he would live in England. His idea of freedom is evidently a very different one from

that of Byron and Shelley. He distrusts sudden and violent revolutions and believes in reforms brought about gradually. He distrusts also organizations which forbid the utterance of individual opinion. No greatness or wealth could, in his opinion, compensate the loss of individual freedom; and that loss alone would be enough to make him leave England and take up his abode in some foreign country.

In the second poem he shows how Freedom, once a far-off ideal, has become the moving power of the British people.

In the third poem he enlarges upon the same idea, and exhorts his fellow Englishmen to stand by the ideals of their land.

178. 43. **The triple forks**, the trident, symbol of Neptune, typifying England's rule of the sea, as the crown her rule of the land.

53-56. Patriotism should strike root deep in the traditions of a people, should show itself in present action, and should pass on some thought to aid the future.

57. **On fixed poles**, the object of loyal affection—our country.

58. **Sordid ends**, mere advantage, commercial or other.

61-69. In these lines Tennyson expresses his distrust of democracy, which he describes as delivering "the tasks of might to weakness."

64. **That every sophister can lime**: Every clever demagogue can convince an uneducated mob. The image is that of *liming* or snaring birds.

66. **Neither hide the ray**. . . . Educate those who are fit for it in your own gospel.

179. 79. **Guerdon**, reward (O.F. *guerdon*). The meaning of the line is that though the disinterested patriot may seem to have no present reward of praise, it will come to him in the future.

85-88. The construction of the sentence is difficult to follow. The simplest interpretation seems to be the one which makes *law* the antecedent of both *thats*. The meaning of the sentence would then be: "Urge the law, when you find a fit occasion, for law may be forcibly urged in debate—law, which, set in all lights by many minds, binds and encloses all our interests."

89. Cold and warm and moist and dry were the four so-called *humours* or elements of which the ancients believed all nature to be composed.

180. 103. **A Bridal-dawn of Thunder-peals**: New ideas often make their way through opposition and war.

181. 132. That principles are rained in blood. The French Revolution was the most famous instance of this likely to occur to Tennyson. In spite of such terrible demonstrations, and in spite of all misconstruction, the patriot, whose action is founded on principles, must abide by these principles and continue to believe in them.

145. To-morrow yet would reap to-day : the future will benefit by what is done in the present.

HANDS ALL ROUND.

This poem formed one of a group of three patriotic songs written at a time when Tennyson's feeling was particularly stirred by the audacities of Louis Napoleon, with which some statesmen in England sympathized. Thirty years later a new edition of the song, set to music by Lady Tennyson, was widely sung as a national song. Sir Alfred Lyall writes to the poet that it was sung in chorus by great numbers in India on the Queen's birthday, 1882.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

The book from which Tennyson took the name and substance of the story in this poem is the collection of stories written by Sir Thomas Malory and printed by Caxton in the fifteenth century. Malory, in his turn, had his stories from an earlier source which he names vaguely as "the French book." While his sources are probably for the most part French poems and romances, the original stories were not always French, but sometimes Welsh and sometimes English. The original Celtic legend is in fact lost in antiquity, and it is now impossible to define the personality of the true Arthur, or to assign the dates of his history. Many chroniclers and poets in England and on the continent made him their hero, and ever introduced more and more variations in his story. Gradually also, many other stories, originally quite distinct, were brought into connection with the Arthurian one and a cycle of romances was formed. Of these stories the most famous is that of the *Holy Grail*. By the time that Malory treated the subject, very little of it was historical. Under the single title of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, he brought together and rendered in his own delightful prose an immense number of tales of King Arthur and his knights, the wizard Merlin, the Sangreal (holy grail), and a host of minor subjects. Caxton, when he came to print this great work, divided it up into twenty-one books, each

containing many chapters. The episode of the death of Arthur is found in Book XXI, chapters 4, 5 and 6.

The stories of King Arthur and his Knights always had a great attraction for Tennyson. In his collected works the series which he calls *The Idylls of the King* takes a very large and important place. These poems first appeared from time to time during a period of about twenty years, beginning in 1855. Much earlier than that, however, he had written poems embodying parts of the story: *The Lady of Shalott*, the fragment *Launcelot and Guinevere*, *Sir Galahad*, and *Morte d'Arthur*, which appeared in 1842. This poem was introduced and closed by some explanatory verses called *The Epic*, which indicate that the author had already in mind the scheme of a much longer work, an *epic* on the subject of King Arthur.

183. 1. So all day long the noise of battle roll'd. Tennyson plunges into his story without explanation. In Malory we have the full account. The battle was the last great fight between the forces of the king and those of his rebel nephew, Sir Mordred. The final scene was a hand-to-hand encounter between the two leaders. The king manages to give the wicked knight his death blow, but in the struggle is himself fatally wounded.

3. King's Arthur's Table, the circle of his knights, so called from the "Order of the Table Round," instituted by the king. These knights, bound to Arthur by the closest and holiest vows, were his constant companions. At great feasts they sat about a round table in his hall, where one mystical seat was reserved for the knight who was absolutely pure in heart and life.

4. Lyonesse, the fabulous country which the romancists made the scene of many stories of Arthur. It was supposed to extend south-westwards from Cornwall, the part now covered by the sea, between the mainland and the Scilly Islands.

9. A broken chancel . . . The details are all selected with a view to heightening the effect of desolation in the scene about the dying king.

21. Camelot, the city where Arthur's court was. Its exact situation is not known, but some modern authorities identify it with the village of Queen's Camel, in Somersetshire.

23. Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again. Merlin, the *mage* or wizard was an important figure in the Arthurian stories. He knew the secrets of Arthur's mysterious birth, and made many prophecies about his greatness. One prophecy was that the king should not die, but merely *pass* from the view of his people for a time, and by and bye

reappear and rule them again. This idea is found in many of the legends.

25. helm, helmet.

27. **My brand Excalibur.** The king's sword, which had come to him as a mysterious gift from a supernatural source. Brand is one of the Anglo-Saxon words for sword; Excalibur is a special name. It was a mediæval fashion to give names to swords and armour as to horses. Charlemagne's sword, for instance, was called *La Jôleuse*.

31. **Samite**, a rich silken stuff, often alluded to by the old romancists.

184. 37. **Middle mere**, the middle of the lake. The construction without preposition is the Latin one.

38. **Lightly**, quickly. The use is common in older English, and Tennyson takes it directly from Malory, who says in Bedivere's reply: "My lord, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again."

60. **This way and that dividing the swift mind.** Tennyson was probably thinking of Virgil's line: "Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc." *Æneid IV*, 285.

185. 80. **Lief**, A.S. *leof*, beloved.

86. **Chased**, engraved.

102. **Joust**, a tournament or trial of skill in the use of arms, from L. *juxta*, a coming together.

186. 104. **The lonely maiden of the lake**, a mysterious lady found in Malory and the older romances. She knew magic and gave enchanted gifts. In Tennyson's later idylls which have an allegorical significance, the lady of the lake represents religion or the church.

187. 139. **A streamer of the northern morn**, the *Aurora Borealis*.

140. **Moving isles of winter**, floating ice-bergs.

143. **Ere he dipt the surface.** Note how the magic sword is given personality in the use of the pronoun.

183. **larger than human**, an object enveloped in mist is always magnified.

186. **harness**, armour.

188. **The bare black cliff clang'd round him . . .** The alliteration and short, accented words in this line give the effect of reverberation. Here, as in the next few lines, the sound is made to echo the sense of the passage. Notice especially the contrast shown in lines 190 and 191, from the noisy journey of the armed knight over the rocks to the sudden view of the still, moonlit lake.

197. **black-stoled, black-robed.** A stole (Fr. *estole*, L. *stola*) was a long cloak.

198. **Three queens with crowns of gold.** Malory says of these three: "One was King Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay; the other was the queen of Northgalis; the third was the queen of the Waste Lands." In Tennyson's later version of the story, *The Passing of Arthur*, the three queens have a place in the allegory and stand for Faith, Hope, and Charity.

189. 215. **greaves, armour for the legs.**

cuisses, armour for the thighs.

Dash'd with drops of onset, splashed with blood from the *onset* or encounter.

218. **High from the dais throne.** Arthur's miserable appearance is contrasted with what he was in his best days, when he sat on his throne uplifted on the *dais* (platform), his golden hair shining like the rising sun.

224. **The lists, the enclosed ground where tournaments were held.** The derivation is uncertain.

230. **When every morning brought a noble chance.** The stories represent King Arthur as sitting in his hall every morning to hear causes and see justice done among his people. The "noble chance" was when some oppressed subject came in with a tale of wrong, and asked for redress. At once some "noble knight" would spring forth and ask for the privilege of riding out to right the wrong, punish the tyrant, and restore the oppressed. *Gareth and Lynette* gives us a typical account of one of these chances

233. **The Holy Elders, the wise men of the East.** See St. Matthew ii. 11.

242. **Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.** The law of change is universal and inevitable. If truth were embodied in one fixed custom formalism would surely result, and people would put their faith in the form or custom rather than in the truth behind it.

190. 255. **Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.** This figure of the earth being bound to heaven by a golden chain is very old, being found in Homer and Plato, and from them being copied by many later writers. Faith and love are the spiritual bonds represented by this golden chain.

257. **If indeed I go.** Arthur's death, like his birth, was shrouded in mystery.

259. **The island valley of Avilion.** This island valley, called also Avalon, is thought to be a hollow in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury, which being nearly surrounded by rivers is called an island. In some of the romances, however, the island is an ocean, one of fabulous character, like the "happy isles" of the ancients. This agrees better with the unearthly qualities attributed to it by Arthur. One legend says that Arthur was carried away and buried or placed in a cavern under the Eildon Hills, from whence he is to come again some day to rule his people.

267. **Fluting a wild Carol 'ere her death.** The tradition that the swan, ordinarily silent, sings when its death is approaching, comes to us from the ancients, and is a favourite illustration with poets.

SIR GALAHAD.

One of Tennyson's early experiments with the Arthurian story, this lyric of Sir Galahad remains as much more than an experiment—a complete and exquisite poem. Galahad is the one of Arthur's knights who, through all changes and chances, preserved absolute purity of soul and life. To him it was permitted to sit in the perilous chair which destroyed all who had the slightest taint of evil. He alone of all the knights was worthy to behold clearly the vision of the Holy Grail. This youthful knight with his stainless purity and unearthly beauty, has been naturally a favourite subject with poets and artists from the Middle Ages until the present. Tennyson's presentation of the character is remarkable and impressive. As Mr. Stopford Brooke says, he "seized in this poem the beauty of celestial purity, and of the supernatural world it opened to his virgin knight." The plan of putting the whole characterization into the mouth of the subject of it, gives unity and vividness to the poem, and in a character so elevated there is no hint of the ordinary vice of self-praise. It is interesting to compare with Tennyson's interpretation of the character, other conceptions, such as that of Mr. Abbey in his fine series of paintings in the Boston Library; and of Mr. Watts in the picture which hangs in the chapel at Eton. Photographs of the latter have been multiplied and are well known.

191. **My good blade** In this first stanza Galahad is simply the invincible young knight. Conscious purity gives force to his blows, but otherwise he does not differ much from other gallant youths in the tournament. In the second stanza we come by a natural transition to a

higher note. The glances of ladies rouse in him no earthly passion, but a reminder of his motive in fighting—the cause of purity to which he is vowed. His ecstasies are the ecstasies of devotion, his visions are visions of heavenly things. In the third stanza we have the knight solitary, renewing his vows in the chapel; then floating away from all places made with hands—even consecrated places, to find in the unpeopled darkness blessed visions of the Holy Grail. To him the storm is no storm, and waste places are alive with blessed presences. All things are spiritualized and Galahad moves through them, himself a part of the spiritual order.

18. **crypt**, a chapel or cell in the underground part of a church. (Gk. *κρύπτη*, a vault).

24. **virgin**, pure, undivided.

31. **stalls** (A.S. *steall*, a place), the seats wholly or partially enclosed at the back and sides, in the choirs of cathedrals and churches.

192. 42. **the Holy Grail**, so often spoken of, was the subject of many legends and has given rise to an immense quantity of literature. According to the legend, the grail or dish (Low L. *gradale*) was the vessel used by Christ at the last supper. It was carried away by Joseph of Arimathea, who caught in it some drops of blood from the wounds of the suffering Saviour at the crucifixion. Subsequently it manifested miraculous powers, and was a source of protection and nourishment for all who beheld it. Joseph of Arimathea, in the course of many wanderings came to Britain, and there, at Glastonbury, new wonders were wrought. Later the Grail was lost, and the quest or search for it became the object of the efforts of many knights. To such as were pure in heart visions of it were granted. This is the version of the grail story followed by Tennyson. There are many variations, one of which has been used by Wagner in his music-drama of *Parsifal*.

53. **Leads**, the lead covering of roofs.

60. **Fens**, low lands, wholly or partly covered with water. (A. S. *fen*, a marsh).

193. 77. **Copses**, a copse or coppice (Fr. *couper*, to cut) is a wood of small growth, or of underbrush and shrubs.

81. **Hostel**, inn.

Grange, farm.

ULYSSES.

"*Ulysses* is perhaps the finest, in purity of composition and in the drawing of character, among Tennyson's dramatic monologues," says Sir Alfred Lyall. And Mr. Stopford Brooke gives us the distinguishing mark of the classical poems in his remarks: "When he takes a classical subject he builds it up with one underlying thought which, running through the whole of the poem, gives it unity. He chooses a simple thought, common to all mankind; felt by the ancients, but to which he gives continual touches and variations which grow out of modern life, and out of his own soul." And again: "The dominant interest here, more than in *Ænone* and *The Lotos-Eaters* is the human interest—the soul that cannot rest, whom the unknown always allures to action—the image of the exact opposite of the temper of mind of the *Lotos-Eaters*."

Tennyson has chosen to write of Ulysses, not as the great fighter against the Trojans, nor as the adventurous wanderer, but as the old man, returned after twenty years of absence to his little island-kingdom of Ithaca. The character he imagines is perfectly consistent with that of the adventurous hero of the *Odyssey*. A hint of Tennyson's conception is found in Dante, *Inferno*, xxvi, 94-120.

193. 3. **An aged wife.** Penelope, whose faithfulness to Ulysses through his long absence was celebrated by Homer and many later poets.

4. **unequal laws.** Ulysses was so disgusted with his occupation that he felt that even the laws which he was trying to administer were not impartial.

5. **and know not me.** These people had never known him in his glorious days and could not appreciate his spirit.

10. **Rainy Hyades.** The Hyades, a group of stars in the constellation of Taurus were supposed to be attended in their rising and setting by storms. *Pluviae*, rainy, is the adjective always applied to them by Virgil and other classic writers.

19-23. These lines express perfectly the unsatisfied longing of an active soul for ever larger and larger experiences. It longs, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer; as he advances, the field simply extends further, the horizon seems to retreat, as the shore of Italy seemed to move away from Æneas as he sailed towards it. The idea of mere existence without action seems to Ulysses as intolerable and unnatural as the idea of a sword rusting away in its scabbard instead of being kept bright by use.

30-32. The construction is Latin rather than English, an absolute phrase. The meaning is clear: (while) this aged spirit (is) yearning, etc.

40. **Decent.** This word was formerly used with a much wider application than it is at present. Here it means exact or ceremonious.

45. **My Mariners.** According to the classical story, the mariners of Ulysses had all perished before this period in his history. Tennyson's introduction of them here shows that he felt free to depart from a literal interpretation in order to complete his idea.

195. 53. **Men that strove with gods.** Venus and some of the other gods aided the Trojans in the war.

60-61. **The baths of all the Western stars.** The horizon line of sea and sky. The Greek poets constantly spoke of the stars as actually sinking into the sea. Milton translates this idea more than once, as in *Lycidas*:

And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.

63. **The happy isles.** The Greek paradise was sometimes represented as situated in certain islands of the Atlantic.

64. **Achilles,** one of the most famous of the Grecian chiefs, the slayer of Hector, greatest of the Trojans.

70. **To strive . . .** With what magnificent force the final line closes and emphasizes the whole idea!

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

"A piece of perfect work, fully felt, and fully finished, simple and profound—and with what fine art Nature is inwoven with its passion!" So Mr. Stopford Brooke characterizes this little poem, and one can add very little to his comment. The poem was written in 1833, the year of the death of the poet's friend, Arthur Hallam, and it is natural to suppose that these few most suggestive lines form a song of sorrow, sounding the note for the longer elegy which was to be built up through succeeding years. Certainly nothing could better express than this, the mood of one utterly possessed by sorrow, looking with a curious sense of the strangeness of it all at the unchanged phenomena of nature, and the indifferent figures in the landscape, going their way as if nothing had happened, as if all the world had not been changed for the bereaved soul who realizes only one thing fully—that the lost can never come back to him. (See also Prefatory Note).

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS."

The Princess, the long poem which Tennyson chose to call "a medley" has been called by one of his critics "a beautiful serio-comic love-story." The theme is that of a girl, rebellious against the old order of submission and subjection for women, revolting and founding a college where she and her disciples may live apart, study and work out their ideals. These ideals being extravagant and impracticable, bring failure upon the whole scheme. The Princess, but not before she has seen terrible battle and havoc in her beautiful gardens, lowers her flag of defiance, accepts and responds to the love of her prince and returns to the recognized sphere of her sex—not however to subjection, but to the measure of equality which an enlightened man is willing to give her.

The poem is artistically beautiful. Tennyson has lavished upon it exquisite descriptions, and set forth his charming pictures in lovely phrases. He has enriched it also with songs which, with their lyric measures, vary the unrhymed metre of the piece. A few of these songs have been selected for insertion here. The first one serves as an interlude between Parts II and III of the poem. It is a lullaby which, as Mr. Brooke says, "writes its own music."

The Bugle Song, which introduced Part IV, is a wonderful piece of sound, and at the same time a thing full of suggestiveness. "It sings, in its short compass, of four worlds, of ancient chivalry, of wild nature, of romance where the horns of Elfland blow, and of the greater future of mankind. And in singing the last, it touches the main subject of love, love not of person to person, but of each life to all the lives that follow it." (S. Brooke.)

The third song is the interlude between Parts V and VI, and expresses very simply the well-recognized truth, that a helpless child makes sometimes a more powerful appeal than any that conscious wisdom or experience can suggest.

The last song, *Tears, Idle Tears*, is found in the body of the poem, being sung by one of the characters. Form and thought are so delicately fused in this that it stands out even among Tennyson's marvellous workmanship, as something singular and unmatchable. The arrangement of words is so musical, that, as Tennyson himself pointed out, few people observe that it is an unrhymed lyric. The recurrent cadence of the last line of each stanza helps the effect, and nothing seems lacking. Here, as in *Break, Break, Break*, the familiar

scenes of nature, in some inexplicable way, serve to interpret the feeling of regret for the past, and of longings unfulfilled.

198. 57. that brings our friends up from the underworld : that brings their ship above the horizon.

64. The casement slowly grows : the square space of the window becomes slowly white in the dawn.

IN MEMORIAM.

PRELUDE.

The long poem *In Memoriam* was published in 1850, but it had been written gradually during the seventeen previous years. Perhaps the last part to be written was the Prologue, which is given here, which touches briefly many of the ideas elaborated in the poem. It is a poem of commemoration, a long, philosophical meditation in which are contained the poet's profoundest questionings of the mysteries of life and death, mysteries newly awakened for him by the loss of his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, who died at Vienna, 1833. In the many sections of this long elegy, we find exquisite pictures, where, as in the short poems of feeling which we have noticed, Nature is used both as an interpreter and a means of contrast with the suffering and tragedy of human life. Again, touched with the newer scientific spirit, the poet tries to read the secrets of nature, and to learn through them something of the working of the laws which govern life and death. Through doubt and despair he passes to the calm which comes of faith in the unseen—to the conviction that the Power who guides the world is just, and will make good to be "the final goal of ill."

4. Believing where we cannot prove. This, being written after all the argument of the poem, contains the poet's conclusion—that it is impossible to prove all things, and that faith must be exercised where knowledge fails.

7, 8. Thy foot is on the skull that thou hast made, an exceedingly striking presentation of the truth that Christ was victorious over death.

199. 9-12. This stanza contains the essence of a great deal that is said in the poem. It is the cry of longing which desires to be conviction, longing for immortal life, statement of the innate feeling of man that he was not meant only for this short life, and finally submission to the will of God who is not only powerful but also just.

23. And yet we trust it comes from Thee. The poet is as far as possible from hinting that knowledge is useless or superfluous. He pleads for more knowledge and finer knowledge, joined with reverence which shall develop soul as well as mind, and fit man to realize the greatness of God and to bear His truth.

33-36. Knowing his own imperfections and the treachery of even what seemed like his good impulses, the poet asks forgiveness, and acknowledges that in the relations between man and God there can be no question of deserving. In human intercourse there is an exchange of what is due, but measured by the standard of perfection, man's best acts can ask only forgiveness.

THE EAGLE.

This fragment is inserted simply to illustrate Tennyson's extraordinary power of presenting a picture exactly, in original but perfectly fitting language.



E. M. C.

examination is on Merchant of Venice."

Keats

Shelley - lyrical poet - reformer

Wordsworth

Shakespeare - "Merchant of Venice."

"

"



Composition.

Revels of Kenilworth.

1870

Katherine A. Ingram.

Sept. 16, 1920.

I would not be so proud I could ~~not~~ see,
The humble daisy nodding ⁱⁿ my path,
Nor yet so.

Shelley - reformer
Jennyson -

Homework - memory - Daffodils

Reproduce thought in "The world is to much with

Describe form of sonnet, composed on head at table

Kay Ingram. 7

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